SERMONS
ON
Several Occaſions.

VOL. II.

BY

E. YOUNG, Fellow of *Wincheſter College*, and Dean of *Sarum*.

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*** *The Excellency of* Reaſon, *no Argument againſt the Wiſdom of* Believing.

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A SER-

A

SERMON

Concerning the

Wiſdom of Believing.

ROM. I. 22.

Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools.

WHatever Value we ſet upon being Wiſe, or whatever Affectation we have of being ſo accounted; yet there is no greater Argument of Human Weakneſs than This, That we rarely know what we mean by *Wiſdom*; nor are our Notions any where more confuſed than

upon this Queſtion, What it is to be Wiſe?

To extricate our Thoughts in ſome meaſure out of this Confuſion, we may diſtinguiſh *Wiſdom* into *Three* Kinds, *viz.*

The *Wiſdom of Grace*,
The *Wiſdom of Nature*, and
The *Wiſdom of Imagination.*

I. The *Wiſdom of Grace* is called in Scripture, the *Wiſdom from above*; becauſe thence it cometh, and we cannot attain it without the Influence of God. Now the Power and Uſe of this Wiſdom is to ſecure our Eternal Intereſt, by the Means of Holy Living and Conformity to the Divine Will: And becauſe this is our main Concern, and all the reſt is but Loſs and Shame and Miſery without it, the Style of the Holy Spirit allows nothing to be Wiſdom but purely This, *The Fear of God, that is Wiſdom*; And our Apoſtle, who had large Talents

lents of other Knowledge, which he might have boaſted of, if they could juſtifie the boaſting; ſtyles all *Fooliſhneſs*, none worth the owning, *but to know Chriſt Jeſus, and the power of his Reſurrection.* He that has this Wiſdom has ſufficient; and without it, the greater our pretences are to Wiſdom, the more conſpicuous is our Folly.

II. The *ſecond* Kind of Wiſdom is that of *Nature*, *i. e.* ſuch as Men may have of *themſelves*, thro' the Power of their native Faculties, and the Improvements of Induſtry and Obſervation. And from this Fountain has flow'd many commendable Fruits in all Ages; All Rules and Arts for the Conduct, Employment, and Accommodation of Life. But foraſmuch as this Wiſdom is often ſeparate from that of *Grace*, ſo it as often turns to Subtilty and Artifice, to Doubling and Inſincerity, to Deceiving and being deceived. This is that Wiſ-

dom whereby our Saviour ſays, *The Children of the World are wiſer in their Generation than the Children of Light*: Wiſer *in their Generation, i. e.* Wiſer to ſerve themſelves in reference to preſent Advantages. Not that Worldly Men are therefore eſteemable to have the better Underſtandings: It were in a manner Blaſphemous to think, That Godlineſs did ever occaſion Stupidity; or that it ever was occaſion'd by it. The Good Man knows as many Methods of Management; but the Worldly Man is bolder to make uſe of all he knows: The Good Man walks on ſimply in the Road of Providence, believing God's Bleſſing to be his beſt Portion; But the Worldly Man turns into every crooked Way, as if it were to make himſelf amends for the want of that Providence and Bleſſing he has no mind to truſt upon: The Good Man looks upon the World as his Inn; and therefore is not ſo ſollicitous for his Accommodations here,

here, as he is for his Arrival at his Journey's End: But the Worldly Man looks upon it as his Home; and therefore imploys all his Care and Intention to make it as eaſie and entertaining to him as he can. For Example;

In the firſt Age of the World, *Cain* is ſaid to *have gone forth from the preſence of God, i. e.* To have caſt off all Care of Religion; And this Perſonal Inclination of His form'd all his Poſterity to be Profane: On the other ſide, *Seth walked with God*, and inſtituted his Poſterity to the ſame pious Care of being Religious. In the mean time we may obſerve, That the Chief Inventions, which ſerve both to the Uſe and Diverſiſement of the preſent Life, as the Forming of Societies, Building of Cities, and finding out curious Arts and Manufactures are all attributed to the Profane Line: But it would be very Raſh for all this to conclude, That theſe were Men of better Parts and Capacities

than the other. The Children of *Seth* accounted it ſufficient for their Happineſs to be contented with what was needful, and to purſue the favour of God as the Conſummation of their Enjoyments, which is undoubtedly the Supreme Wiſdom. Whereas the other being deſtitute of hopes from God, made it all their ſtudy to procure ſuch Enjoyments to themſelves as might be had without Him. But let us obſerve a little further, and ſee what the World it ſelf was the better for all theſe iſſues of it's Wiſdom: In the power of it Men brought in many agreeable Advantages; but thro' the Corruption of it they likewiſe brought in the Flood; wherein all were deſtroyed, but thoſe few that had eſcaped the common Depravation. And what, then, is the Wiſdom of the World, but, (as our Apoſtle calls it) *Fooliſhneſs with God?*

III. The Third kind is what I call the Wiſdom of Imagination, that is, a Wiſ-

dom

dom that has its Being in Opinion and Conceit; and by which Men come to think well of themſelves. Now this kind of Wiſdom is a meer Shadow; for even they that are Fools pretend to it, as well as they that are of greater Talents; but *neither* are at all the wiſer, in truth, for this Opinion of their being ſo: And as it is, in it ſelf, a Shadow; ſo it chiefly aims and catches at a Shadow, that is, at Vain-Glory and the Admiration of others. Now we may obſerve of this kind of Wiſdom, That it is always attended with one miſchievous Companion, and that is the Affectation of Singularity: They that are Wiſe in their own Conceit, always found their Conceit upon the Knowledge of ſomewhat that is Odd and out of the Way: They hate to think in the common Level; They value not themſelves for knowing what is vulgarly known; but eſteem it their Excellency to ſtart Novelties, and to be the Originals of their

own Opinions. From which it follows, that this kind of Wiſdom is always a direct Adverſary to Faith: For Faith is a ſimple Thing, and delivered purely with the Deſign that all ſhould receive it Uniformly; In which caſe the Man that affects Singularity is never pleas'd till he can form ſome New Conception of the matter Revealed, whereby he may import that the Reach of his Underſtanding is above the common Meaſure. So that the main Characteriſtick of this Wiſdom is to be ever Oppoſing, or Scrupling, or Refining upon Faith, and pretending to lead that revealed Light, which we all ought to follow with a ready and chearful Submiſſion. From this buſie Itch of pretended wiſe Men, to unſettle Religion, and miſ-interpret the Meſſages of God, and to vend their own Imaginations in place of Divine Oracles, it was that the Prophet, *Iſ.* 5. 21. Denounces *Woe againſt them that are Wiſe in their own Eyes, and*

Prudent

Prudent in their own Sight. And my Text is no leſs a warning againſt this kind of Wiſdom, from the exemplary Miſchiefs that it has formerly brought upon others, *who profeſſing themſelves to be Wiſe became Fools.* The Truth that is pointed at in theſe Words, and from this Example, I ſhall farther evince, and apply in theſe two Propoſitions.

(1.) That Humane Wiſdom is a dangerous Guide in Matters of Religion. And,

(2.) That God has vouchſafed Faith as a neceſſary Expedient in order both to make and to keep Men Wiſe.

The firſt Propoſition, (*viz.*) That Humane Wiſdom is a dangerous Guide in Matters of Religion; I ſhall evidence by ſhewing, that the greateſt Miſchiefs relating to Religion, that ever yet happen'd to Mankind, have ow'd their Original to this pretended Wiſdom. And

I need

I need no more to prove this than the following Inſtances, *viz.*

(1.) That VViſdom firſt extinguiſh'd the common VVorſhip of God and brought Idolatry into the World.

(2.) That VViſdom firſt waſted Man's Conſcience, and brought Sin into the VVorld.

(3.) That this VViſdom firſt corrupted Faith and brought all Hereſies into the Church.

As to the firſt Inſtance (*viz.*) That VViſdom firſt extinguiſh'd the common worſhip of God and brought Idolatry into the VVorld.

It is the expreſs Intimation of the Text. For the Apoſtle is here treating concerning the Idolatry of the *Gentiles*; to what extravagance it proceeded, and from what Cauſe it ſprung; a Subject, which cannot be duly conſider'd without matter of VVonder. *Noah* the Preacher of Righteouſneſs, who had warn'd the old VVorld and call'd them

to

to Repentance *in vain*, had at leaſt this Advantage by it, that he came with greater awe to Teach and Inſtruct the New: And he taught them in ſuch a manner, both what they ought to *Believe* and to *Do*; that the Apoſtle ſays of them, *v.* 21. *They all knew both God and his Worſhip*; tho' it was a Knowledge they liked not to retain; but inſtead of that, as *v.* 23. *They changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God, into the Image of corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beaſts, and creeping Things.* And this Corruption of Faith and VVorſhip together, came on ſo faſt, that the ſame *Noah* who had ſeen the Funerals of the old VVorld, for their *No* Religion; ſaw likewiſe in his own days the new World overſpread with a *Falſe* Religion, more Abſurd and Irrational than *None*. Now the Text tells us expreſly, that this State of things, as ſtrange and groſs as it was, was introduced under the pretences of VViſdom, *Profeſſing to be Wiſe they became*

came Fools ; And then as an Inſtance of this it is added, *They changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God, into the Image of Corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beaſts, and creeping Things:* From which it appears, that their bringing in of Idolatry, altho' it was the Proof of their Folly, yet it was the Project of their Wiſdom.

It was the Wiſe amongſt them that form'd the Deſign, and addreſt to the Multitude with a grave appearance, and prevail'd (as we may conceive) by ſome ſuch Form of Arguing as this. "We "are all aware, ye Sons of *Noah*, that "Religion is our Chief Concern, and "therefore it well becomes us to improve "and advance That, as much as poſſi-"ble: And altho' we have receiv'd Ap-"pointments from God for the Wor-"ſhip that he requires, yet if theſe ap-"pointments may be alter'd for his grea-"ter Glory, who doubts but it will be "a commendable Piety ſo to alter them?

"Now

" Now our Father *Noah* has inſtituted
" us in a Religion, which in truth is too
" Simple, and too Unaffecting; It
" directs us to worſhip God abſtracted-
" ly from all Senſe, and under a con-
" fus'd Notion; under the formality of
" Attributes, as Power, Goodneſs, Ju-
" ſtice, VViſdom, Eternity, and the
" like; an Idea which we neither ſuffi-
" ciently reach, nor does that ſufficient-
" ly reach our Affections: whereas
" in all Reaſon we ought to worſhip
" God more pompouſly, and more ex-
" tenſively too, than in his own Eſſence.
" We ought not only to adore his Per-
" ſonal Attributes, but likewiſe all the
" Emanations of them, and all thoſe
" Creatures, by whom they are eminent-
" ly repreſented; this will ſtir up and
" quicken and direct our Devotion.
" Nor let any ſay that this Method will
" derogate from the Honour of the Crea-
" tor; certainly it is moſt expreſſive of
" *his* Honour, when we acknowledge,
" that not only Himſelf but even his

Creatures

" *Creatures* are Adorable. We ought " therefore (if we will be Wiſe) to wor- " ſhip the Hoſt of Heaven ; or rather " to worſhip *God through them*, becauſe " they are eminent Repreſentations of " his Glory and Eternity: We ought to " worſhip the Elements becauſe they " repreſent his Benign, and Suſtaining " and Ubiquitary Preſence: We ought " to worſhip the Ox and the Sheep, and " whatever Creatures are moſt beneficial, " becauſe they are the Symbols of his " Love and Goodneſs: And with no " leſs Reaſon, the Serpent, the Croco- " dile and other noxious Animals, be- " cauſe they are the Symbols of his aw- " ful Anger. Thus it is that we ſhall " worſhip him more intenſly, and *feel* " and be affected with our Worſhip.

Now to Men diſpos'd with a Deſire to be wiſe in Religion above what was preſcrib'd, there is no doubt but ſuch Arguments as theſe would ſoon ſeem wiſe and weighty enough, to enforce their

their Deſign. But there was another part of Idolatry which obtain'd firſt, and ſpread fartheſt, that Wiſdom had yet more moving Pretences to eſtabliſh it upon. The firſt Fruits of Idolatry was offered up to Men; as we learn in this *Chap.* from the *Verſe* following, and more at large from *Wiſd.* 14. where we are told, that Princes were worſhipp'd; whether Preſent, in their Perſons; or Diſtant, by their Statues and Pictures; And then that Men Inferiour to Princes, but eminent in their Generation for any beneficent or obliging Qualities, were worſhipped after their Death. As for the worſhip of Princes, we have no reaſon to doubt but it was as high and as early as *Nimrod* himſelf: *Belus* and *Jupiter*, Names by which he was known in other Regions, import no leſs than his Deification: So that tho' he fail'd in building his Tower to Heaven; which was a haughty attempt, that God thought fit to check and repreſs; yet he fail'd not

not to build up himſelf to Heaven in the Eſtimation of his Admirers; which was a Judgment that God thought fit to permit upon thoſe that ſo boldly ſought it.

As for the Deifying of Princes, Wiſdom ſuggeſted that They were the Repreſentatives of God's Power upon Earth; to which Character, worſhip was reaſonably due: And not only ſo, but becauſe ſuch an Adoration would beſt conduce to the good Government of the World, foraſmuch as it added a new Obligation to Peace and Submiſſion; and made it of Religious, as well as Civil, Importance.

As for the Worſhiping of thoſe among the Dead, who had been famous in their Generation (ſuch as former Ages vulgarly ſtiled Heroes, and Modern the Beatify'd, or the Saints) Wiſdom had abundance to alledge for this eſtabliſhcent. As,

(1.) That ſuch an Honour beſtow'd upon the Vertuous, was but a proper In-

Incitement to others to imitate the ſame Vertue.

(2.) That to Honour thoſe that were eminent, in ſuch a manner; was chiefly to honour God, whoſe diſtinguiſhing Communications made them ſo.

(3.) That to Addreſs and Supplicate to ſuch as Mediators, was a more Modeſt and Reverential Addreſs to God, than if we applyed immediately to himſelf.

(4.) That by applying to thoſe who had been ſo nearly touched with our Infirmities, and our Sins themſelves not excepted; we were ſure to find the more Compaſſionate and tender Advocates. I doubt not, but Men in that Age were qualified to argue for their Humours, as well as they can now; and we know, that Wiſdom has carried this point, in the Church of *Rome*, even at this day, this day of *Meridian*, that is of Goſpel Light.

Thus *Wiſdom brought Idolatry into the World.*

The ſecond Inſtance I propoſed, to evince it a dangerous Guide in Matters of Religion, was this: That Wiſdom (or let me indifferently call it Reaſon, a Name more in vogue and more uſed in reference to the preſent Subject, but it means purely the ſame thing; I ſay) It was Wiſdom or Reaſon that firſt waſted Man's Conſcience, and brought Sin into the World.

There has been a time, when Human Wiſdom or Reaſon had a fairer pretence to Conduct than ever it will have again. In *Paradiſe*, where it was without the Oppoſition of Appetite, without the Byaſs of Prejudice, without the Cloud of Perturbations; who can think but that it had *then* more Power and Freedom to conduct wiſely, than ever it could pretend to *ſince*? But therefore, if it failed then in point of Conduct;

this

this muſt needs paſs for an Argument to abate ſome of that Veneration, which the Opinionative are willing ſhould be aſcrib'd to it, under this State of ſo unhappy a Change; Let us then conſider the Scene of things as it lay at that time.

God then charged our firſt Parents not to eat of the Tree in the midſt of the Garden; binding his Charge with this Sanction, That they ſhould die when they did it: Now at that time there was not any φρόνημα σαρκὸς, *No Law of the Members warring againſt the Law of the Mind*; no Rebellion of Appetite againſt the Dictates of Underſtanding: To ſuppoſe there *was*, would be to ſuppoſe our firſt Parents ſain even before the Fall, and to have been *made* under the ſame Diſorder, that their Poſterity now complains of. And accordingly we find in holy Scripture that the Sin of our firſt Parents in that caſe is diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of all their Off-ſpring: For whereas other Mens

Sins are generally called ἐπιθυμίαι, Luſts, we may obſerve that *their* Sin is always called ἀπάτη, Deception: The Apoſtle calls it ſo no leſs than thrice, ἀπάτη, that is, a Deception or Impoſture that they ſuffered to paſs upon their Underſtanding: Whereof we may take an Illuſtration from a Scriptural Paſſage, 1 *Kings* 13. where we find a young Prophet of *Judah* ſent to denounce God's Judgments againſt *Jeroboam* in *Bethel*; who withal received a Command that he *ſhould neither Eat nor Drink in that Place.* Now it no way appears that the violence of this young Prophet's Appetite did raiſe in him any deſire to diſobey this Command; on the contrary, he was upon his return reſolvedly and contentedly, without either Eating or Drinking; ſo that 'tis plain his Appetite did not conſtrain him to tranſgreſs: But an old Prophet of the Place (moved probably with Envy that the Honour of this Meſſage had been

been conferr'd on a Prophet of *Judah*, and not on himſelf) addreſſes to him with an Impoſture ; telling him that God did reverſe his former Order, and did now give him Liberty to Eat and Drink in *Bethel* : As conſequently he did, and thereupon received the Reward that is due to him who diſobeys a certain Command, for the ſake of an uncertain Suggeſtion. With the like Impoſture and Fiction it was, that the old Serpent addreſs'd himſelf to our firſt Parents ; implying by the Tendency of all his Diſcourſe, that God had either diſſembled his real Will in his former Order, or at leaſt that he had now Revers'd it ; So that now they ſhould not Die, but on the contrary receive great advantage from the Eating of the Fruit : And hereupon they proceeded to Eat it, being drawn aſide to do ſo, not from the violence of Appetite, but from the temerity of Reaſon ; which ſuffered them to believe an uncertain

Suggeſtion, in oppoſition to a certain Command. From which I obſerve that it was Reaſon not Appetite, that made the firſt falſe Step in Nature, and withal open'd an inlet to the ſucceeding violence of the Paſſions. And how little cauſe have we then to lay ſuch a ſtreſs upon that Faculty; or to be ſo fond of its Guidance? For if Reaſon betrayed in the moſt perfect State, how much more eaſily will it do ſo now; if ever it be permitted to argue againſt the obvious Senſe of what has been Revealed?

And if Wiſdom were thus Originally the Parent of Sin; we may leſs wonder that in after-Ages it has become ſo indulgent a Nurſe to it; as we may prove it to have been, by *one* Inſtance I ſhall offer; from which it will appear, that this pretenſion to Wiſdom or Reaſon has given a greater blow to Vertue, and ſettled the Empire of Sin upon a firmer Eſtabliſhment in the Chriſtian World,

than

than either Ignorance or natural Pravity was ever able to do in the Heathen. For Example;

When the State of a general Idolatry (but now mention'd) had brought Men to deſert God; and God, in Juſtice, to deſert them to the miſchief of their Option; when in conſequence to this affected Blindneſs, Men in moſt caſes came to be at a doubt what it was to do well; and more uncertain of what advantage it would be to do ſo: One would have thought that Sin *Then*, if ever, was like to get the Field; and that the Kingdom of Satan had been ſettled without Reluctancy: And yet it was not ſo: The Heathens ſtill found an Invincible Check from the Bodings of their Conſciences, and the Apprehenſions thereupon that there was to be a future Reckoning: And by this very Bridle many amongſt them liv'd under great Reſtraint, and were Men of Virtue; and they that were otherwiſe could not

eſcape Remorſe and Affrightment for their Guilt.

The Wiſdom of the World to arm it ſelf againſt theſe Fears, did, (1.) (from Countenance of the palpable Miſtake concerning the Gods then in Worſhip) *ſtart* the Opinion, *That there was no God at all.*

But the Notion of Atheiſm did ſeem ſo Monſtrous and Irrational, that few would receive it; and They who profeſs'd it, were lookt upon as not believing themſelves; but as ſpeaking rather what they wiſh'd, than what they thought. And of this the *Pſalmiſt* gives us Notice, *Pſal.* 14. 1.

Others (propoſing to offer leſs Violence to the common Conceptions of Mankind) taught, That *indeed there were Gods; but that they were Regardleſs of Humane Affairs; and that ſuch a State of Incurioufneſs in them was neceſſary to their own Happineſs and Quiet*: But neither could this Notion work far; becauſe it

it ſeem'd to the Generality, as abſurd and more affronting to the Divine Nature, to believe that God was Indifferent and Regardleſs, than to believe there was no God at all. And of this Doctrine the *Pſalmiſt* gives us Intimation, *Pſal.* 94. 7.

A Third, and that the ſtrongeſt Barrier againſt ſuch ill Bodings, was drawn from the Philoſophy of our Conſtitution, *whereby the Soul was repreſented as neceſſarily Mortal as the Body, and thereupon ſecure againſt all future Accounts.* Of which Doctrine *Solomon* gives us a large Notice, *Wiſdom*, chap. 2.

Perhaps I had been more in the Mode, had I mention'd *Greece* for the School of theſe Doctrines, and *Diagoras*, *Protagoras*, and *Epicurus* for the Doctors: But I am ſenſible, what great Diſreſpect has been ſhewn to the Holy Scriptures, by this Affectation. In which Scriptures (during the Period they pretend to, which is much above half of that Time the World has hitherto laſted) we meet

meet with the beſt Account of all things, even Civil as well as Sacred. And how abſurd would it be for me, in this particular Matter, to aſcribe the *Fortuitous Being*, and the *Periſhable State of the Soul*, and the *Regardleſneſs of the Deity*, to *Epicurus*; when we find theſe Notions recorded in Holy Writ, as eſpous'd long before *Greece* had ever opened a School to any of this vain Philoſophy?

But, theſe Circumſtantials ſet aſide, my main Point was to ſhew, That theſe ſeveral Arguments had not power to ſhelter the Heathen World, from frightful apprehenſions concerning the future ill conſequences of Sin: They ſtill doubted, that foraſmuch as their Souls had a Notion of Eternity, they had likewiſe an Eſſential Relation to Eternity; And therefore they thought that their own inward Hopes and Fears ſpoke better Senſe about the iſſues of ſuch a Duration, than they could meet with

with from the Reaſonings of thoſe that pretended to be wiſer. And here the Heathens were forc'd to ſtop; and tho' their Wit and Will were heartily joyn'd to ſerve the cauſe of Vice as far as they could, yet they could never remove this awful Barrier. Whereas, in a more Illuminated time, (as we muſt allow that of the Goſpel to be;) The moſt Illuminated of that time (as they would have us allow the *Socinians* to be) have with great Oſtentation, and as great Applauſe of their Wiſdom, done the cauſe of Vice more effectual Service, than ever could be done it before.

Abating the Outrage they have done the Scripture, (about which they are not very Sollicitous) they have made their Hypotheſis Plauſible, as well as Grateful: They ſpeak reſpectfully of God; and not diſreſpectfully of the Soul; They determine not *How*, or of *What* it is made; but they determine that, as it is a Creature of God's, ſo it

is

is either Mortal or Immortal at his diſcretion: And thereupon to reward the Pious with Eternal Happineſs, is what well ſuits with God's Goodneſs and Benignity: But it would not do ſo, to puniſh the Sinful with Eternal Torments: *That* could neither ſuit with Goodneſs nor Juſtice it ſelf: Becauſe that between Temporal Guilt and Eternal Puniſhment, there is no Proportion: And therefore all that the ſinful Soul may fear from God, is a Declaration of its Incapacity for Heaven, and a Sentence for its extinction and loſs of Being.

Never ſuch an *Amulet* as this, was offer'd to quiet all the bodings of Conſcience; Never did Sin ſleep upon ſo ſoft a Pillow, as is made up of this Hypotheſis; which carries careleſs Souls, beyond all former Hope, ev'n into the Lap of their own Wiſh; which is, *Never to be acquainted with Eternity, ſo they may undiſturbedly enjoy their preſent Inclinations.*

Juvenal

Juvenal the Poet, ſpeaking of that Notion that the Heathens had form'd of a future State, That there was a Boat, and a Ferryman, and a black Lake, and frightful Frogs in it, which careleſs Souls were to paſs over to a miſerable Abode; Cries out —— *Quis puer hoc credat? i. e.* (*In Hypotheſi*) in its circumſtantial Dreſs, *It were Childiſh to believe this*—— But adds (*in Theſi*) *At tu vera puta*——: Do thou who ever thou art, believe *This*, at leaſt ſomething *like this*, to be true.

And who can ſay but *Juvenal* was a wiſe Man in this Reflection? But then is it not ſurprizingly ſtrange, that a more elevated Wiſdom ſhould ſet it ſelf to prove, That nothing like This ought to be believ'd? And that all fears of Futurity are Groundleſs, except that of being made Inſenſible? It was Wiſdom to believe Hell Torments, in thoſe that neither knew God nor his Revelation; And can it be Wiſdom too, for any

not

not to believe Hell Torments, who are ſure that God has revealed them? And is it not farther ſurprizingly ſtrange, that thoſe Men who pretend their *Zeal for Morality* is above that of all others, ſhould open ſuch a Sluice to the Flood of Immorality? Alas! what a Contradictory thing is profeſſed Wiſdom, when once it affects to lead in Matters of Faith? It is much more both abſurd and miſchievous, than confeſſed Folly.

Thus much for the *ſecond* Charge of Wiſdom, (*viz.*) That it brought Sin into the World.

The laſt I propoſed, to warn us againſt fondneſs for its Guidance, is This, (*viz.*) That it firſt corrupted Faith, and brought all Hereſies into the Church.

Suitably to this --- It is commonly obſerved of that Sect of Men, who in the earlieſt days of Chriſtianity invented ſo many various Corruptions of Faith, that they hardly left room for the Invention of ſubſequent Ages to find out any New;

New; That they affected, for a diſtinguiſhing Name, to be call'd *Gnoſtici*, *i. e.* the *Knowers*, or ſuch as underſtood more than their Neighbours. And we cannot doubt but that our Apoſtle had an Eye to ſome of theſe, and their wild Opinions, as well as the Principle that occaſion'd them, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. where charging *Timothy* to ſtand firm in the Faith, and to keep that *Depoſitum*, *i. e.* that Scheme of Chriſtian Doctrine which had been deliver'd; preſcribes to him this Means as neceſſary to his purpoſe (*viz.*) *That he ſhould avoid the oppoſition* τῆς γνώσεως *of Science* (or Wiſdom) *falſly ſo call'd*;) *which ſome profeſſing have erred concerning the Faith*: We know, the Scripture meddles not with the Impeachment of any *Science*, or with *calling it falſe*, but barely as it intrenches upon Faith, and oppoſes that which it ought to follow: And therefore this *Science* is here ſpecifi'd by its *Oppoſition*, *i. e.* its Inclination to oppoſe the Faith commonly re-

receiv'd; accounting it a reſtraint (as I have intimated already) to think or believe with the Vulgar.

And to evidence that this *Kind of Science* did make *Men err concerning the Faith*, as the Text alledgeth; Let us but conſider thoſe Hereſies that are mentioned in Scripture as firſt obtaining in the Church, and we ſhall ſoon ſee how they took their Riſe, at leaſt all their Pretence from this very Principle.

Some there were (we know) who erred concerning the *Reſurrection, ſaying it was already paſt*; and no doubt but it was a ſtart of Wiſdom and Affectation of extraordinary Reach that firſt form'd this into a Hereſie. For Example;

Some of the Heathen Philoſophers who were grown to dreſs up their Doctrines for Oſtentation, and not ſo much to inſtruct, as to ſurprize, and make themſelves admired; had pronounc'd of Vertue, That it was a ſufficient Reward to it ſelf; and that a good Man

was

was Happy enough in being Good, and leading a Life according to Reaſon, altho' there were no Expectations of a future Recompence. Whereupon ſome Chriſtian Proſelytes pleaſing themſelves with the vain Glory of this Notion, adopted it into Chriſtianity, and held that it was a Poor and Mercenary thing to practiſe Godlineſs for the Expectation of another World; And that therefore, altho' God had in the Goſpel declared a Reſurrection, yet this Reſurrection was to be underſtood in a Figurative and Moral Senſe, *i. e.* to import no more than a riſing from the State of Sin to the State of Righteouſneſs: And that the Chriſtian Vertue would *then* be more glorious, and more worthy of God, when it ſhall appear that he obeys for *God's ſake*, rather than for *his own*? Thus thoſe of the *Anti-Anaſtaſie* were pleaſed, by dint of Wiſdom, to void the Promiſes of Heaven; which wild Concluſion we may wonder at the leſs, ſince

the wiſe *Socinians* have at this day, with no leſs contradiction to Scripture, been pleaſed to void the Threatnings of Hell.

We are told of another Sect in that Age, who erred concerning the Condition of the Goſpel-Covenant; Reſting upon a naked Faith as the entire Qualification; and *thereby voiding the Law*, vilifying Obedience, and turning the Grace of God into Wantonneſs. One would not think indeed, that Wiſdom could have much of pretence towards this Project, and yet it had: The *Antinomians* alledg'd, That whereas it was the peculiar Glory of God to be infinitely Merciful; and the Glory of Chriſt's Satisfaction to be infinitely Valuable; The more Guilt Men had, the more abundant opportunity they gave to God to diſcover the Riches of his Pardon; and the more Men were in Debt, the greater appeared to be both the Value of their Ranſom, and the Credit of their Redeemer.

No

No doubt but this Arguing ſeemed Wiſe to them that uſed it; And at leaſt we have this to alledge for the ſupport of its pretence, That the *Antinomians* were not more extravagant, in aſſerting that Chriſt's Satisfaction was ſufficient to ſave without the care of Good Living; than the *Socinians* are, in aſſerting that the Care of Good Living is ſufficient to ſave, without the Satisfaction of Chriſt: For ſo their Scheme runs;

That Chriſt neither made nor intended any Satisfaction at all; and yet every Impartial Man may convince himſelf, That it is not more evident in Scripture, That God requires us to be Holy, than that Chriſt ſhed his Blood for our Redemption; Redemption I ſay, not in the Exemplary, but in the Expiatory Senſe.

We have another Maſs of Heretical Corruption, ſpoken of by our Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. not indeed as then reigning, but rather foretold as that it ſhould

reign, through occaſion of a *Certain Man of Sin ſitting as God in the Temple of God*: Even the Papiſts allowing, that the Scene of this grand Corruption of Faith is *Rome*; and we may, without prejudice, affirm it to be Popery it ſelf. Now to ſee how *Wiſdom* has contributed to bring this Maſs of abuſes into that Church, Let us but conſider this ſingle One; which we may look upon as the moſt Characteriſtical (*viz.*) The ſetting up of a Humane Infallible Guide: Whereby every Biſhop of that See, ſeems to effect the pretence of *Montanus*, and would be held for a Holy Ghoſt Incarnate; And what can come nearer to *one ſitting as God in the Temple of God?*

What hand *Wiſdom* had in hatching this Conceit, we may learn from the wiſeſt of that Communion; when they alledge that the Belief of *This*, is the ſure and onely Method to end all Controverſies, and eſtabliſh that Peace and Union which all good Chriſtians deſire.

And

And as for the Means made uſe of to bring this Conceit into Credit, they have carried in them the moſt pompous Semblance of Wiſdom Imaginable: While its particular Champions, the *Jeſuits*, (the Artificial *Petavius* and others) have contriv'd with elaborate Pains and Study, *to weaken the Authority of the Scriptures*, as being of Uncertain Interpretation, and of Uncertain Reception; and *to puzzle the Senſe of all the diſtinguiſhing Articles of Chriſtianity*; by alledging the Oppoſition of Hereticks, and the difference of Conciliary Decrees; and by raking up all the Diſſonancies of Expreſſions, that are to be met with in the Writings of the Ancients.

As indeed, how can the ſame Truth be delivered without Diſſonancies of Expreſſion, ſuppoſing it to be delivered upon different Occaſions, and for different Reſpects? Let the Expreſſions of St. *Paul* and St. *James*, upon the Article of *Juſtification*, paſs for an Inſtance of Appeal.

In the mean time, the *Wiſdom* of the Church of *Rome* thought fit to do all this Inſidiouſly, and with purpoſe to Deceive, ſo they might ſerve this Important End, (*viz.*) To make Chriſtians believe that they muſt needs be bewildred while they were under ſuch an unſtable Conduct as that of the Scriptures, Councils and Fathers; and therefore to conclude themſelves obliged to repair to the ſtanding Infallible Guide.

Ask the *Socinians* themſelves, Whether there were not admirable Wiſdom in this Contrivance: For even they themſelves make uſe of the ſame Means, and borrow their boaſted Arms of Learning from the Jeſuit's Shop; not indeed to the ſame End, in Form; but to the ſame, in Miſchief; Not to eſtabliſh the Pope for an Infallible Guide; but to eſtabliſh Reaſon for an Infallible Guide; which, in effect, is to ſet up as many Popes in the World, as there are Men of an aſſuming Imagination.

What

What I have ſaid hitherto, has been in order to evince the Truth of my firſt Propoſition, (*viz.*) *That Wiſdom is a dangerous Guide in Matters of Religion.*

I offer'd a Second, (*viz.*) *That God has vouchſafed Faith as a neceſſary Expedient both to make and to keep Men Wiſe*; Which I reſerve for the Subject of another Diſcourſe.

SERMON II.

ROM. I. 22.

Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools.

FRom theſe Words conſider'd, together with their Occaſion, I have before inferr'd theſe *Two* Heads of Diſcourſe:

I. That *Humane Wiſdom* (or Reaſon) *is a dangerous Guide in Matters of Religion.* And this I have proved already, by ſhewing, How ſtrangely *Wiſdom* has fail'd in all her Conduct about ſuch Matters. The *Second* is,

II. That *God has ordained Faith as a Neceſſary Expedient, both to Make and to Keep*

Keep Men Wiſe. The Proof whereof I am now to purſue.

I ſuppoſe there is no Man in the World, of what Perſwaſion ſoever, but will be ready to grant, That what God vouchſafes to reveal, muſt be abler to make us VViſe, than what we can conceive of our ſelves: Nor (in conſequence) will any deny, That Faith to what is Revealed, is a Due which we owe not only to God for the Honour of his Truth; but likewiſe to our ſelves, for the ſake of our ſafe Conduct: And therefore there is like to be no Diſpute whether *Faith* (in general) can make Men VViſe; The Diſpute is only upon this Point, VVhat kind of Faith (in particular) it muſt be that makes Men *Wiſe*; And we ſhall find that the Judgment of Mankind lies under a common Prejudice againſt what is true in reference to this Point. For we may obſerve it to obtain in the VVorld, That the Faith

adapted

adapted to make a VViſe Man, muſt be a *Cautious* and *Reſerved* Faith, becauſe all Forwardneſs in Believing expoſes Men to be deceived: And yet in Holy Scripture we are taught clean contrary, That God is only pleaſed with an *Humble and Ready* Faith, and every Abatement of Forwardneſs is a Diminution of its Value. Our Saviour in his VValk to *Emmaus* calls his Diſciples *Fools*, becauſe they were *ſlow of Heart to Believe*. And ſoon after he tells *Thomas*, That the Tardineſs of his Faith had robb'd it of its Bleſſing, For *Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed.*

And becauſe I am faln upon the mention of this Apoſtle, I will chooſe to inſiſt a little upon his Character; which may ſerve both for an Example and an Illuſtration of the matter I am upon.

Thomas (as far as we may learn by all the mentions made of him in Holy VVrit) was a Man *Bold in Reaſoning, and extreamly Nice in Believing*: VVhich

is

is a Character that by the ſtandard of the preſent Age has Licence to paſs for an Indication of VViſdom.

Joh. 14. 2, 3, 4. VVe have a Paſſage of Diſcourſe wherein this Apoſtle was wholly concern'd: There our Saviour ſays very obligingly to thoſe about him: *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions--- I go to prepare a place for you --- And whither I go you know, and the way you know*: To this obliging Declaration *Thomas* anſwers very peremptorily, *Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt, and how ſhould we know the Way?* VVe ſee the Anſwer is directly contradicting to that which our Saviour alledged; and yet no doubt but the Apoſtle thought himſelf to have Reaſon on his ſide for making ſuch an Anſwer. Let us imagine what that Reaſon might be: 'Tis poſſible he might form his arguing on this manner.

" Lord, Thou ſayeſt, Thou art " going to thy Father's Houſe to pro- " vide Manſions for us: Now we know

" thy

" thy Father's Houſe, according to na-
" tural Generation, is that of *Joſeph* and
" *Mary*; in which many Manſions are
" not to be had: But if thou meaneſt a
" Father by any other kind of Genera-
" tion; or any other Inheritance which
" thou haſt a Title to recommend us
" to: This is what we do not under-
" ſtand; and what we do not under-
" ſtand, it is impoſſible for us to Believe:
" And therefore ſay to us ſomething that
" we *may* believe; or in the mean time
" permit us to be Incredulous and to ſay,
We know not whither thou goeſt.

If I have in this Form, Argu'd any thing contrary to the Sentiments of the Apoſtle; I have whereof to Retract in reverence to his ſubſequent better Underſtanding: But I fear I have ſaid nothing that the preſent Age will require me to Apologize for; Becauſe they who ſet up for a leading Genius, pleaſe themſelves to argue in the very ſame Method, to juſtifie a like Incredulity. Thus runs

the

the common Argument, "*We cannot be-*
"*lieve what we pleaſe; we muſt compre-*
"*hend both the Matter and its Credibility, or*
"*elſe it were Raſh and Fooliſh to believe it.*

Joh. 11. We have another Paſſage wherein *Thomas* was wholly concern'd: There (*verſe* 14.) our Saviour ſays to his Diſciples, *Our Friend* Lazarus *is Dead, and I am glad for your ſakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe*: This we ſee our Saviour urged expreſly, for an Encouragment of their Faith; and yet *Thomas* his Reaſoning turned it immediately into an Argument of Diſturſt: As is apparent from what he ſaid to his Fellow Diſciples upon this Occaſion, (*verſe* 16.) *Let us alſo go, That we may Die with him*: The Key of his meaning in this Sentence we may take from the Narration in the beginning of the Chapter: VVhere 'tis ſaid That our Savour being then in *Galilee*, upon the News of *Lazarus* his Sickneſs, propoſed to go into *Judea* to viſit him:

Where-

Whereupon the Diſciples anſwer'd, (*V.* 8.) *Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to Stone thee, and goeſt thou thither again?* Now this Thought made a deep Impreſſion upon the wary Imagination of *Thomas*; and therefore when he ſaw his Maſter reſolved to go; he wound up all into this ſort of *Reaſoning Deſpair*. "*Lazarus* is Dead, and all his Pains "and Fears are over; and better it were "for us, if ours were ſo too: The Jews "Malice is bent upon the Deſtruction "of us all; and if our Maſter could not "ſave his principal Friend from Death; "what hopes is there of his ſaving us? "Let us go then and meet our Doom "as patiently as we can. This is the natural Paraphraſe of what *Thomas* meant by that Sentence, *Let us alſo go that we may Die with him*: And altho' nothing could be more contrary to the Faith he ow'd his Maſter, or more affronting to the importance of what he had then ſaid; yet ſtill he looks upon this

this as *ſound Reaſoning*: And indeed it was as ſound, as any other Man's is; and brought forth as good Fruits as any other Man's does, when it once takes Licence to *Scruple*, what it ought to believe.

The laſt mention of this Apoſtle is in the Inſtance of the Reſurrection. He had been told that our Saviour was Riſen from the Dead; and the truth of it had been atteſted to him by Evidences beyond Exception: Several Companies who had ſeen him, and convers'd with him ſeveral times; to whom he had expos'd the ſight and feeling of his Wounds; to whom he had Expounded the Scriptures concerning himſelf; with whom he had broken the Sacramental Bread; and conferr'd on them the operative Benediction of, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*: All theſe, with all theſe convincing Tokens, had told *Thomas* that Chriſt was Riſen: But yet *Thomas* (in pure Wiſdom) would not believe. *He*

was

was alſo called Didymus, ſays the Text: And I think that Allegation, how caſual ſoever it may ſeem, is Argumentative to my purpoſe: (*viz.*) *Thomas* had a *Greek* Name as well as a *Hebrew* one; which is a probable Argument that he had a Converſation with the *Greeks*; and perhaps had learnt from them That μὴ μᾶλλον ἀπιστεῖν *Have a care of being Credulous*, was the grand Advice of one of their Sages; and thereupon he reſolved not to believe without farther Conviction than all this. And no doubt but he conceiv'd *Reaſon* to be on his ſide, for all this Behaviour: *Reaſon* ſuggeſted, that a wiſe Man ought to be cautious to the utmoſt, leaſt he be impos'd upon: *Reaſon* ſuggeſted that when he had his Choice of ſeveral Matters to believe, he ought to chooſe that for the Matter of his Belief, which was in it ſelf moſt Credible: Now it was more Credible that ſuch a number of VVitneſſes might be *Deceiv'd*; or (as Honeſt as they once were)

were) might be drawn into Confederacy to *Deceive*; Then that *One ſhould riſe from the Dead*: Becauſe *This* was naturally Impoſſible; It could not be done without a Miracle; and wiſe Men will never have recourſe to Miracles, ſo long as nature may ſolve the Appearance.

Now ſuppoſe that *Thomas* proceeded Thus far with Reaſon on his ſide; and acted like a *Wiſe*, that is to ſay, a *Cautious* Man (as for ought I ſee, the ſtandard of many Men's Judgments at this day will allow him to have acted:) Yet let me obſerve one thing more from his Example, and that is This, (*viz*) *That Human Reaſon is very ſubject to be partially Blind*: For while it is Hunting after thoſe Arguments that make for its preſent Purpoſe, it never takes notice of thoſe that make more ſtrongly againſt it.

As for Inſtance: When *Thomas* refus'd to admit Conviction from the Senſe and Atteſtation of ſo many credi-

ble Witneſſes; Yet at the ſame time he declared it fit to be determin'd by the Verdict of his *Own Senſe*: Where he never conſider'd what a haughty Piece of Injuſtice it was, to imply that his own ſingle Senſe was leſs Fallible, than the joynt Experience of ſuch a Number. Again, while he imagin'd it poſſible that ſo many good Men ſhould conſpire to deceive him; he never conſider'd how many Arguments there were, to prove that this Cenſure of his was Abſurd, as well as Uncharitable: For had he not Convers'd now three years under the Conviction of all ſorts of Miracle, and could he not extend his Faith to believe that One more might be done? After he had ſeen his Lord raiſe more than One from the Dead, could he not think it poſſible that he himſelf might be rais'd by the ſame Power? Nay (what was yet more culpable than all the reſt) after he had heard his Lord publickly averring before hand, that *Thus it muſt be,*

be, and that he ſhould Riſe again the Third Day; He never conſider'd, that to diſtruſt the Event after ſuch a prediction of ſuch a Perſon, as had ſufficiently prov'd himſelf able to do whatever he thought fit to be done, was a diſtruſt abſolutely Irreligious and Prophane. And yet thus it was --- Thus the wiſe Pretences of Incredulity could betray *Thomas* to be Irreverent, Uncharitable, Abſurd and Irreligious, and all under the colour of being Reaſonable. Theſe extravagant Effects, *Niceneſs* in believing could produce in him; And who can Queſtion but that they are likely to produce the ſame in any one elſe?

This ſingle Example ſerves to inform us, into what a *Labyrinth* Reaſon will lead Men, when once it declines the Conduct of an humble and ready Faith; and upon This, my Aſſertion is founded, that ſuch a Faith is our only Guide unto Wiſdom.

But I ſhall proceed to evidence the ſame by a black Cloud of Inſtances.

I doubt not, but they who ſcruple, or oppoſe, or depart from the Common Faith at this day, will readily allow, That in whatever they except againſt the Received Form, they do it from this ſame principle of Wiſdom and Caution, (*viz.*) Leſt they ſhould be impos'd upon by the Miſtakes of others; and therefore they reſolve to adhere to ſome Senſe of their own, which they look upon as more Rational, and leſs obnoxious to Abſurdity or Deceiving. And there are *Two* Parties of Men, who have made themſelves very notorious for this Pretence.

(1.) The *Firſt* is of Thoſe, who will not allow any *Revelation*, *i. e.* Not any Scripture dictated from God.

(2.) And the *Second* is of thoſe, who will not admit the received Interpretation of that Scripture, which they allow to have been Revealed.

Now

Now it may be made appear from the Inſtances of theſe very Parties; *That no Man ever departed from the Common Faith, upon pretence of avoiding any Abſurdities therein ſuppoſed; but that he ran himſelf upon the neceſſity of believing greater Abſurdities, than any he pretended to void.*

I. The firſt Party conſiſts of Thoſe who deny all Revelation; who profeſs a Religion of Nature's Teaching, but none that God has taught: Who diſtinguiſh themſelves by the name of Deiſts, becauſe they own a God, but barely a God; and not thoſe diſpenſations which are moſt ſuitable to the Goodneſs of the God they own: Of which Revelation is the Chief.

Now however the Wiſdom of ſuch Men may pleaſe it ſelf with this cautious Infidelity, which they pretend to take up as a Guard againſt Impoſture; Yet would it not be wiſer for every Man to ſuſpect his particular Reaſon, when he

does, or may, obſerve it to claſh with the common Reaſon of Mankind? And certainly to deny Revelation, is a Conceit that claſhes with the Univerſal Reaſon and Perſwaſion of Mankind in all Ages of the World. For there is nothing wherein Men have conſented more freely (next to the Being of a God) than in this Belief, That it is ſuitable to the Goodneſs of God to hold a Correſpondence and Commerce with Men, and to exert himſelf in a Providence that extends as well to the Conduct of Actions, as to the diſpoſal of Events; that is, a Providence for Man's better Part, as well as for his Worſe.

So long as Men continu'd in the Worſhip of the true God, They had this Notion riveted upon their Minds by the vouchſafement of frequent Meſſages, and of ſuch Oracular Directions, as demonſtrated themſelves to come from God: And when Men departed from the true Worſhip, yet they could not

not depart from this rooted Expectation: Inſomuch that the Devil could not maintain the Reputation of his Worſhip among them, without a pretence to the ſame Commerce. And this was the Original of all the Heathen Oracles; Which altho' *they* were Deluſory, yet they afford an Evidence that there were others True and Divine; and that Mankind always *hoped* for ſuch from the God they Worſhipp'd.

The Deiſt will ſubmit his Faith to a Heathen Evidence, tho' he will not to a Chriſtian; And therefore he will not deny theſe Oracles to have been, and to have been frequent, among the *Gentiles*: He readily grants that *Socrates* (which he is willing to prefer above Chriſt and his Apoſtles) got his Reputation of being counted the wiſeſt Man of his Country, from the Reſponſe of an Oracle: (In which Reſponſe, by the way, we muſt preſume either that God over rul'd the Voice of the evil Spirit

(as he did in *Balaam's* Caſe) and ſo *forc'd* him to ſpeak on Virtue's ſide; Or elſe that the Devil found himſelf neceſſitated ſometimes to do ſo, in Reverence to Mens Conſciences; over whom he was not always able to maintain his awe without ſome ſemblance of *approving Virtue.*) Now if ſuch Oracles *were*; Let any one likewiſe tell us how they came to ceaſe all together, as 'tis own'd they did, at the Time of the Revelation by our Lord Jeſus: How came they thus to ceaſe on a ſudden, if it were not from the deſign of Providence to make that event give Teſtimony both to Jeſus and his Revelation: To Jeſus, that he was one who had Power over the Devil; and to his Revelation, that it was Plenary and Conſummate; ſo that, for the future, Men needed not ſeek any farther, to learn *what is the full and acceptable and perfect Will of God.*

When the Deiſt confirms his prejudice againſt the Chriſtian Revelation from

from this Argument, *That all Religions do equally pretend to the ſame Orginal, that is, to come from God:* I allow that Reaſon has *Here* a proper Province; Let it therefore be call'd in: Let Reaſon enquire, and then Judge, and ſay whether there is any other Religion ſo worthy of God as the Chriſtian is? Whether there is any whoſe Doctrines are ſo convincing: And whoſe Miracles are ſo Demonſtrative: Nay, whether ever there was any thing of Human Faith, that came ſo atteſted as our Religion does, and fail'd of Belief in the World: And what ſingular Perverſeneſs is it then, that this ſhould not be believed? Let any one ſay eſpecially, How the Goſpel-Truth, that aſſerted it ſelf ſo effectually in its beginning, at that time when any poſſibility of fraud could beſt have been diſcover'd; after it had aſſerted it ſelf againſt all the Malice of Satan, and the Oppoſition of all Worldly Powers; can after 1600 Years be given up as a Fi-

ction,

ction, or be affected with any ſuch diſcredit, from the perfidiouſneſs of a company of bold, and looſe, and weak Deſerters? Let any one reflect upon theſe Conſiderations, and he ſhall find that the Deiſts Opinion runs them upon a multitude of Abſurdities; beſides all the fatal miſchief of its unconſidered Conſequences.

The ſeveral Religions received among the *Gentiles*, were ſo full of groſs Superſtitions, and palpable Errors, that many particular Men among thoſe *Gentiles*, of ſounder Judgments and better Spirits than the common, were ſcandalized at their Religions, and had them in Contempt: So that, altho' for Decency's ſake and Submiſſion to the Laws, they gave occaſional countenance to the vulgar Rites of Worſhip, Yet their private Religion conſiſted in forming to themſelves a more rational Notion of God, abſtracted from all the received Idols; And the Worſhip they deemed moſt ſuitable

table to ſuch a God, was placed in following Reaſon, and reverencing their Conſciences, and cultivating their Minds in the ſtudy of Knowledge and Practice of Virtue: And theſe were ſuch as, among the *Greeks*, they firſt call'd Philoſophers. They whom we modernly call Deiſts, are the *Apes* of thoſe Philoſophers; and that they may be thought like them, ſet up to treat *Chriſtian* Religion with the ſame Contempt as *thoſe* did the *Vulgar Heathen*. But as it is obſerv'd of the Ape, that altho' of all Creatures it moſt reſembles Man, yet it is the uglieſt of all Creatures, becauſe the Honour of that reſemblance is abated by many ridiculous Deficiencies; So we may ſay of the Deiſts, that they are the moſt abſurd and fooliſh of Men; becauſe they *Ape* the wiſe under ſuch great difference of Circumſtances, and ſuch great deficiencies of Purpoſe.

For the Philoſophers were ſuch, as in the Night of *Gentile* Darkneſs, ſet up their

their Candle (ſo *Solomon* calls *the Spirit of Man, The Candle of the Lord*;) they ſtrictly attended the improvement of their Minds, and ſo ſet up their Candle, and walked commendably by the Light of it: Now theſe Men were truly Wiſe, none under their Circumſtances could poſſibly be Wiſer. But on the contrary the Deiſts are ſuch, as at Noon-Day ſhut up their Windows, and keep out the Sun; and then ſet up their Candle, and ſay that That is the moſt agreeable Light, and the beſt Guide to their houſhold Buſineſs. Now what can be alledg'd for the Wiſdom of Theſe? There have been ſome carried away with this phantaſtical and miſtaken Admiration of the Philoſophers Religion, in former times of Chriſtianity; but they were rare as Monſters, and ſo accounted of: But they never grew Numerous and in heart till of late, ſince they took their Growth and Apology from the Conduct of

of the *Socinians*; The ſecond Party I propoſed to inſtance in.

II. The Conduct of the *Socinians* was this; They own'd the Scriptures to be the Word of God, but would not abide by the received Interpretation of that Word; nor admit that Explication of the principal Doctrines therein contain'd, which had been delivered down by the Univerſal Church; but inſtead of this, uſurped a Liberty of Interpreting all a-new at their own diſcretion, and to make them ſpeak their own prejudicated Senſe. In conformity to this Deſign, *Socinus*, after he had form'd his new Scheme of Divinity, to make it paſs upon the World with all the Advantage he could, Introduces his Expoſition upon St. *John*, with this Sentence, *Multa ſunt profecto in quibus Chriſtianus orbis adhuc cæcutit, & fortaſſe plura quam quis vel credere, vel etiam cogitare poſſit*, i. e. *There are undoubtedly many Truths, and perhaps*

more

more than any one can either believe or imagine, in reſpect of which the whole Chriſtian World has been hitherto quite Blind and Ignorant : Which Sentence (and ſeveral ſuch like accompanying it) makes it appear, That never any Man more fill'd up each Member of that Character which our Saviour gives of the Phariſee, (*viz.*) *Of thinking well of himſelf and deſpiſing others*, than *Socinus* did. For it implies, that altho' the Scriptures were the Oracles of God, yet they reſembled thoſe of the *Gentiles* in this ; That they were Dark and of a doubtful Senſe, and of no authoritative Interpretation; and that hitherto they had been quite miſtaken, till ſuch time as this new Illumination had been vouchſafed to himſelf. Now ſince this Imagination paſt upon *Socinus*, from his Caution of being impos'd upon by the former Interpreters of Scripture : Let us conſider how palpably he muſt have impos'd upon himſelf, before this Imagination could take place.

If

If he believed it himſelf; can any one elſe in Reaſon believe, That the whole Chriſtian World had been Blind down to his days, and Ignorant in the moſt important Truths, which it was reſerved for his honour to Reveal; So that the *Light of the Word* had not yet enlightned Mankind, till his Comments had diſpell'd the Cloud that lay upon it? Can any one believe with Reaſon, that all the Aſſertors of our Religion in the Primitive Ages, Men Holy, Studious, Learned, Signalized and Diſtinguiſh'd with all the Gifts of God, both Gracious and Miraculous; had yet none of that *Knowledge of the Mind of God*, as might now be learnt at the feet of *Socinus*? Can it appear agreeable to the Providence of God, and his good Will for Human Salvation, after he had required Faith, to pleaſe him, as well as Obedience; and that, Faith in Doctrines, as well as in Promiſes; yet to let 15 Centuries paſs without making it commonly known

known, what it was he required Men to believe? Can it appear conſiſtent with God's Promiſe to his Church, That his Spirit ſhould lead them into all Truth, and yet for ſuch a Tract of time the whole multitude of Chriſtians ſhould account it impious to believe that, which now the *Poliſh* Catechiſm ſays, *It is damnable not to believe, when it is propos'd:* So that if Chriſtians were ſaved before that time in the Common Faith, it was from the Apology of their Ignorance; as their Ignorance was, becauſe they had not a *Socinus* to inſtruct them.

Say rather, why the Deiſts may not as colourably *Reject* the Scriptures, as the *Socinians Own* them, with ſo many contradictions to God's Truth and Goodneſs. In due Reverence to both theſe Attributes of God, we are obliged to affirm that the *Senſe* as well as the *Letter* of the Scripture, in all Matters neceſſary either to be done or believed, hath been the *Depoſitum* of the Church, and Faithfully

fully Preſerv'd under its Keeping: That the whole Faith, which (as the Apoſtle ſays) was ἅπαξ, *at once delivered unto the Saints*, had at the ſame time its *Meaning* delivered; which from them has been derived by indubitable Teſtimony, as the Matter of our uniform Belief: That the different Opinions, Sects and Factions in the World, are no Argument againſt This; Becauſe as St. *Peter* has warn'd us, they who diverſifie the Common Faith, do not *Interpret* but *Wreſt* the Scriptures; and (as St. *Paul* has obſerv'd) Diviſions and Hereſies ſpring not from *Ignorance*, but from *Carnality*; not from want of Light, but want of Love: Pride and Envy and Contention and Vanity, and ſuch contrarious Paſſions, have in all Ages, not been at a Loſs for Truth, but have been contriving and ſetting up ſomewhat they liked better. And let us ſee, in the next place, what it was that the particular Affecti-

ons of *Socinus* liked better, than the received Interpretations.

He and his Party are pleas'd to take offence, that there are any Myſteries in Religion ; They will have nothing for the *Object* of our Faith, but what is plain to our Underſtanding, and eaſy to our apprehenſion ; and altho' they will not affirm, that Reaſon has the Meaſure of what *is*, or what may *be* ; yet they reſolve Reaſon to have the Meaſure of what ought to be *believed* : Which I think is Abſurdity ſufficient.

They conclude thereupon that the Doctrine of the Incarnation, that is, of God *Taking our Fleſh, and dwelling among us*, muſt not be believed, becauſe it is Irrational : And as for the Doctrine of the Trinity it would be offenſive to pious Ears to repeat thoſe expreſſions of Reproach, with which they load it. They ſay that theſe Doctrines do juſtly ſcandalize *Jews* and *Turks*, and hinder them from coming in to our Religion.

But

But as it is no Office of Civility to complement away our Faith; ſo neither is it any Office of Charity in the *Socinians*, to go off from the Foundation to meet *Jews* and *Turks*; and to turn Half-Infidels, that they may turn Half-Chriſtians. But after all, when by the groſſeſt wreſting of Words, and abuſe of plain Senſe, they have ſhewed themſelves as much Friends to Fancy, as they are Enemies to Faith; after that they have interpreted all Myſteries out of Religion, and ſo made their new Hypotheſis familiar and inoffenſive, and therefore Credible, as they would have us imagine; We muſt pronounce upon it, what *Minucius* ſometimes did in the like Caſe, *In Incredibili Verum, in Credibili Mendacium*; *Truth ſtill lies on the the Incredible, and Falſhood on the Credible ſide.*

And to juſtifie this Cenſure, let us conſider, *That the Myſtery of any thing, or (what is all one) The Abſtruſe or Incom-*

prehenſible Nature of any thing, is no Argument againſt our believing it.

This is a Rule, I am ſure, that holds true in Nature; and then with what Face can we deny it to hold true in Religion? We ſurrender our Faith to the ſtate of all *Viſible* things, without comprehending them; and what Obſtinacy is it then to refuſe our Faith to the *Things of God* under the ſame Condition? It would be an affront and calumny to Nature, to affirm that *Thoſe things which are before us*, thoſe Works of God which lie every Moment under our Senſes, are *ſimply* Credible; that is, ſuch as our Reaſon would Perſwade us *could* be, if we had not *ſeen* them to be: How ſhort is our Plummet from Fathoming, the Eſſence, Mode, Powers, Operations, Productions of the moſt common Beings? Undoubtedly had we the Knowledge of this World we live in, as we have that of its Maker, only from a Book; I ſay, had we the Knowledge of this

this World we live in only from a Book, we ſhould be Tempted to treat that Book with as little Reverence, as the *Socinians* or *Deiſts* have done the Holy Scriptures: And conclude that moſt of the things that are in it were as Incomprehenſible, Impoſſible and therefore Incredible, as they fancy any thing to be, that God has revealed concerning himſelf.

Let me produce an Inſtance or two, and thoſe out of the Holy Scriptures, to inculcate by the way, That the Philoſophical Truths we meet with *there*, are Venerable as well as the Divine.

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth, ſays the Sacred Hiſtory: Where the Word *Created* is interpreted by all to mean, That God made the World without any Pre-exiſtent Matter to make it of; Now this Production of the World we believe from the Authority of the Report; and likewiſe becauſe of the Abſurdities that neceſſari-

ly follow from the Suppoſal of the contrary: And yet Human Reaſon could never form any Idea, whereby to conceive the Poſſibility of ſuch a Production: And let any one ſay whether it be harder to believe, *That the Divine Eſſence did from everlaſting emanate or flow into Three Social and Co-eternal Subſiſtences*, than to believe, That *in the Beginning of Time all things were made out of Nothing*: Or whether Reaſon has more Arguments to plead for the One, than for the Other.

Holy *Job* to exemplifie the Power of God, pitches upon this Inſtance, *ch.* 26. 7. *He hangeth the Earth upon Nothing*; or (as his Expreſſion points elſewhere) *He maketh it ſtand firm without a Foundation*: Now when we find it impoſſible for the utmoſt Art of Man to make a ſmall Clod of Earth hang in the Air, it is naturally Impoſſible for Man to conceive, how the *whole Maſs* ſhould hang in the Air: 'Tis true when we ſee how things *are*, we Pride our ſelves in

aſſigning of Reaſons why they *muſt* be ſo, but all fall ſhort of ſolving the Difficulty: Center or Magnetiſm or whatever Notions have been eſpouſed, will not ſolve it in the preſent Inſtance: No Cauſe could make the Earth hang upon Nothing, but the Omnipotence of that Will that ordered it to be ſo. Nor could we ever believe it, but from a Submiſſion of our Faith to that Omnipotence; Or from a Submiſſion to our Senſes, even while they controul and muzzle the Reluctancy of our Reaſon.

For another Inſtance of the Incomprehenſible Works of God, The Sea is alledg'd in the ſame Book (*cap.* 38.) Of which 'tis ſaid, *That God has eſtabliſht its place by his Decree, and ſet Barrs and Doors before it, and ſaid to it, Hitherto ſhall thy proud Waves come, and no farther.* Which Obſervation is founded upon the convexity or roundneſs of the Surface of thoſe Waters; in reſpect of which (as the Pſalmiſt naturally expreſſes it) *They*

ſtand upon a heap: A heap as miraculous, were it not more common, as that the *Iſraelites* paſt thro', in the Red Sea: For in this heap the VVaters are bound up, that (as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it) *They turn not again to cover the Earth*; which by the common Laws of Motion, they otherwiſe muſt neceſſarily do, and pour in upon every Shore a Deluge inſtead of a Tide. Reaſon uninform'd by Experience of this ſtate of things, could not poſſibly believe it; and yet how wild would the Man be thought, that ſhould not believe it?

Once more --- The Pſalmiſt for an Inſtance of the ſame kind, takes it from the frame of our own Being, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*: To conſider the Curiouſneſs of our Frame is amazing, and to reflect upon the Power that orders it to be ſo, is no leſs than Tremendous. Let me inſtance but in one Particular, whereof I will borrow the Hint from *Solomon* in his deſcription of old

old Age, *Eccl.* 12. 6. *Or ever the Wheel be broken at the Ciſtern*: Which Expreſſion cannot be interpreted ſo Genuinely of any thing, as of that Spring and Pulſe in the Heart, which begins the Circular Motion of our Blood; Let us conſider, in this Inſtance, How our Blood, a ponderous Body, (contrary to the Laws of common Nature) aſcends without reluctancy, and deſcends without Precipitation; is of ſo many different Colours, under ſo many Forms of digeſtion, moves ſo many Years without any influence of our Thoughts or Reflection, and when it ceaſes takes Life away with it ſelf. Let any weigh theſe Circumſtances, and he may well cry out with the ſame Holy Writer, *ſuch Knowledge is too Great and Excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.* And yet none of this Myſtery is an Argument againſt believing it.

I need inſtance no farther: Nature is full of Myſteries and Incomprehenſible Things,

Things; and may we think then, that the Nature or Subſiſtence of God can be Reveal'd to us, and not admit a Myſtery? We account thoſe *Iſraelites* were very groſs Logicians, who thus argu'd *Pſal.* 78. *He ſmote the ſtony Rock indeed, that the Waters guſhed forth; But can he give Bread alſo, and provide Fleſh for his People?* That is, although we acknowledge that God has done *this* Miracle, we will not believe he can do *another*: But it is yet *more groſs* arguing, for any one to ſay, I believe the *Works* of God, altho' they are Incomprehenſible; But I will not believe any thing of *God himſelf*, unleſs I comprehend it.

'Tis true, we believe theſe Incredible things in Nature, becauſe we ſee them: But then, may not our *Ears* bring in as good Evidence as our *Eyes*? Certainly we are leſs obnoxious to Deception in *hearing* what God ſpeaks, than we are in *ſeeing* what Nature exhibits.

But

But this ſtill is the Queſtion, which the *Socinians* will not ſuffer to be beg-g'd: They affirm that God has not *ſpoken* any Myſteries concerning either himſelf, or his Methods of our Redemption; They ſay, our Interpreters have coin'd theſe Myſteries: Whereas *Their* Interpretation has voided them, and made them all plain.

And here (I confeſs again) Reaſon has a proper Province to act in; For altho' Reaſon is not to preſcribe the Matter of our Belief; Revelation is to do That; yet Reaſon is a proper Judge whether ſuch or ſuch a Matter is Reveal-led or no: For this conſiſts only in apprehending the Senſe of plain Words; which every Man's underſtanding has an equal Right to pretend to.

Whereas therefore *Socinus* ſays, he had a favourable regard to *Jews* and *Turks* in his Interpretation of the Scripture; let them fairly be call'd in, and ſuffered to Interpret for themſelves. *They are Scandaliz'd*

daliz'd at the Belief of a Trinity; Be it ſo: But when they ſee in the Scriptures, That there are *Three* to whom we are *devoted* in our Baptiſmal Covenant; Three in whom we muſt *believe*; To whom we muſt *pray*; By whom we muſt *bleſs*, to whom we muſt give *Worſhip and Glory*: Undoubtedly they will believe a Trinity, as ſoon as they will believe that the Scriptures do *not Teach* One.

They are averſe from believing that Jeſus was God; Be it ſo: But when they ſee it expreſs in Scripture, That he, who in time was Jeſus, *was God from everlaſting*; that when he took our Fleſh upon him, *He thought it no Robbery to be equal with the Father*; that he it is, *who in the beginning laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of his hands*: Undoubtedly they will as ſoon believe that Jeſus is truely God, as they will believe that the Scriptures do not ſay he is.

Let

Let them ſee How when our Bleſſed Lord was charged *with Blaſphemy* for making himſelf *Equal* with God; he denyed not the matter, but only abſolved it from the Crime: How at his moſt Solemn Devotion, when about to leave the World, he prayed on this manner: *And now (O Father) Glorifie me with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was:* Undoubtedly they will conclude, That if what the *Socinians* ſay be True, (*viz.*) That he was not God, *Neither was he a Good Man:* For all this deportment can imply no leſs than, that he *affected to be accounted* God; and ſo he was ambitious (ev'n ſacrilegiouſly ambitious) of that Honour to which he had no Title; and this no Good man could be.

In fine. Let Jews and Turks be admitted of the Jury, and they will undoubtedly give Verdict; That if we are deceived in our Common Faith, that Spirit that dictated the Scriptures could

could deſign no leſs than that we ſhould be deceived. Let thoſe who have given occaſion to ſuch Reflections as theſe, find out a Reply whereby to ſtave off their Reproach.

In the mean time I may obſerve that the *Socinians* have been Unlucky in the execution of their main deſign: For they have not purged Myſtery out of the Scripture, they have only *changed its Place*: They have taken Myſtery out of *the Doctrine* of the Scripture, where it was Venerable, and VVorthy the Majeſty of God; and they have placed it *in the phraſe of* the Scripture where it is opprobrious and repugnant to God's Sincerity. For Example, Expounding *Joh.* 1. 1. They ſay, That, *In the beginning was the Word*, ſignifies no more than that Chriſt *was*, when he was born: That, *The Word was with God*, ſignifies nothing elſe, but That Chriſt was taken up into Heaven to receive Inſtructions for his ſubſequent Errand; That,

The

The Word was God, ſignifies no more than, That he was God's Meſſenger; That, *All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made, that was made*; ſignifies only, That he was to preach the Goſpel, by Virtue whereof Men were to be made New Creatures. VVhat Myſtery and Riddle do they make of theſe Expreſſions; and how remote is that Meaning from the Reach of a Rational Conjecture?

Amidſt this Romantick Pains of Interpreting, They met with a Text in the General Epiſtle of St. *John*, (*viz.*) *There are Three that bear witneſs in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe Three are One*; which ſo baffled their Invention, that they deſpair'd of ever accommodating it to their Scheme. Whereupon the Brethren of *Tranſylvania* thought it their wiſeſt way to Vote this Epiſtle out of the Canon; But being inſtructed that there were ſome Copies of the Bible wherein this Text

was

was not found, they concluded it for their Advantage to let the Epiſtle paſs for Canonical, but the Text for *Spurious and Forged*: And hereupon there grew a great Triumph over the *Trinitarian* Cauſe; but a Triumph without any poſſible Victory; For the Cauſe does not want ev'n the *Text*, much leſs a Forgery of it, to ſupport it ſelf withal.

'Tis alledg'd that this Text was not read in thoſe Copies that were in vulgar Uſe at the time of the Council of *Nice*; becauſe otherwiſe it would certainly have been cited againſt the *Arians*: However this be, 'tis as certain that this Text was read in thoſe Copies that were in uſe *before* the Council of *Nice*; For St. *Cyprian* aſſerting the Unity of the Church, notwithſtanding it conſiſted of ſeveral Congregations, Argues it from the Unity of the Godhead, altho' conſiſting of ſeveral Perſons, and cites This Text for his Proof.

And

And *Tertullian* aſſerting This to be the Chriſtian Doctrine, That the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, were each of them God, and yet the God-head not Divided, proves it from this Text, *Hi tres Unum ſunt.* And then he remarks from the Gender that they were not *Unus* but *Unum, i. e.* not One in *Perſon*, but One in *Eſſence.*

Thus it was before the Council of *Nice;* and within half an Age after that Council, *Damaſus* Biſhop of *Rome* (perceiving from common Complaints, that many Differences were crept into the ſeveral Copies of the Scripture) imploy'd St. *Jerome*, the moſt expert Man in *Biblick* Learning that was in the World, to beſtow his Pains in rectifying thoſe Errors. And he having Copies ſent to him from all Parts of the World (as himſelf expreſſes it) and conferring them together, among many other Emendations from the Authority of thoſe Copies that were moſt Ancient and Authentick,

he reſtored this Text, with a Brand of Unfaithfulneſs upon thoſe who firſt omitted it: So that all the Fault concerning this Text, can lie only on thoſe who firſt *left it out*; And what ſide of the Controverſie that Fault can affect, let any one Judge.

I mention this by the By, and only to give ſome Caution againſt the Artifice of the preſent *Socinian* Factors; who inſinuate with Hands lifted up that the *Trinitarian* Cauſe muſt needs be deſperate, when it could be reduc'd to ſuch mean ſhifts as the forging of a Text for its ſupport: Which as it is a Calumny that may indeed ſhock the Surpriz'd; ſo all that are at leiſure to open their Eyes, may ſee it has no Foundation.

Upon the whole, we find that the *Trinitarian* Cauſe aſſerted it ſelf ſufficiently againſt *Arius*, altho' his Oppoſition was *more* formidable than any others can be: Becauſe his Hypotheſis came by little and little to be ſo finely ſpun, that many

many Good Men profeſſed, they could hardly ſee that the Difference of the Controverſie lay more than in Words; and that *Erat quando erat*, which they only inſiſted upon (being applyed to the Term of a Rational duration not a Temporary one) was not competent to juſtifie ſuch Uncharitable Diviſions.

But as for the *Socinians*, their Hypotheſis is Groſſer and Looſer, more Abſurd and more Precarious, and therefore neither their Arts nor Arguments can ever be ſo formidable. God averting the Judgment of removing the Candleſtick from an unworthy Age: For under that Determination the *Weakeſt* Means will be ſufficient to undo us.

I inſiſted upon *Thomas* (at the beginning of this Diſcourſe) as a Pattern of the *Socinians* Incredulity: But *Thomas* being vouchſafed an irreſiſtible Conviction, made what amends he was able, by Crying out *My Lord, and my God!* Which the Chriſtian VVorld has hither-

to lookt upon as the Orthodox Confeſſion of our Faith in Chriſt. But the *Socinians*, to *avoid this part* of his Example, are pleas'd to expound his Confeſſion in this Myſterious manner. They ſay, that the Firſt Compellation *My Lord*, was directed to Chriſt; implying that *Thomas* acknowledg'd him to be his very Lord and Maſter; But the ſecond Compellation *My God*, was only an effect of Admiration, and was directed by an Apoſtrophe to God in Heaven, and meant no more than Men ordinarily do, when admiring they Cry, *O God! what a wonderful thing is this?*

Alas! That theſe Men would let Reaſon and Modeſty work on them ſo far as to reſtore Myſtery to its proper Place in the Book of God! To let it be in *Things*, where it is Adorable, and to remove it from *Words*, where it is Ridiculous! That they would allow *Thomas* to have ſpoken Truth, and plain Senſe in the Form of his Confeſſion! And that

that he is through all Ages more wiſely Imitable in his Retractation, than in his Unbelief! That they would not give Covert to their Obſtinacy under this deluding Axiom, *We cannot believe what we* Will, *We muſt have Reaſon for what we believe*! Since it is the higheſt Act of Reaſon to ſubmit our Aſſent to that Teſtimony that cannot deceive us: And ſince it is the next Act of Reaſon to receive that Teſtimony in the moſt natural Senſe of the VVords wherein it is deliver'd: And ſince it is equally an Act of Reaſon to believe, that whatſoever is Revealed relating to God, *The more Incredible it ſeems, the more Credible it is*: Becauſe if what is Revealed concerning God, were always adapted to our Comprehenſion, how could it *reach*, or with any fitneſs repreſent that Nature, which we allow to be Incomprehenſible?

But farther to evince the Deceit of that Axiom, *We cannot believe what we*

Will, we muſt have Reaſon on our ſide: Experience will make it appear, that *Will* has frequently more influence upon our Belief than Reaſon has. 'Tis an old Rule, built upon juſt Obſervation; That *What we would willingly have, we eaſily Believe.* And let any one aſſign a Cauſe why moſt Men ſhould think ſo *Particularly* concerning themſelves, concerning their own Talents, Properties and Opinions, ſo that no indifferent By-ſtander is able to think the ſame, if it be not This, That Fondneſs can carry it above Reaſon; and where Affection takes Place, their Judgment becomes partial and blind and pronely Seducible. And as *Will* has ſuch an Influence upon our Belief, ſo be ſure it has the ſame upon our not Believing: There is no cauſe aſſignable for our not believing many Things, ſo eminent as this, that we are not *Willing* to believe them: We refuſe our Aſſent as often for want of Inclination, as we do for want of Argument:

And

And, looking into the bottom of Motives and Pretences, we ſhall find a Truth well worth our Obſerving. (*viz.*) *That what Men at firſt call Reaſon, and afterwards Conſcience; is oftentimes no other than Affection and Prejudice and Wilfulneſs crept into the Chair.*

I have neither time nor need to inſiſt any farther for the Proof of that thing I purpoſed. From the Conſiderations already offer'd, I think we may ſafely conclude, That an humble and ready Faith (*Caſting down Imaginations, and every thing that exalts it ſelf againſt the Knowledge of Chriſt*) is the only Expedient both to make and to keep Men Wiſe.

To the Author and Finiſher of our Faith God bleſſed for ever, be all Glory and Thankſgiving World without End.

ADVERTISEMENT.

FOr asmuch as a Certain Author hath thought fit to print Remarks upon the two foregoing Sermons, the Reader will find a Cenſure of thoſe Remarks at the end of this Volume.

A

SERMON

Concerning

Nature and Grace.

St. MATTH. XXVI. 35.

Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.

THE Words beſpeak us to contemplate a Juſt and Dutiful Reſolution; made by a Man that had both as much Conſcience to engage him in what was fit, and as much Courage to execute what he had engaged in, as any other of Mankind muſt ever pretend to. And yet this Reſolution was not

not kept, it failed very diſgracefully: And my chief Purpoſe at this time is to enquire into the Cauſes, How it came ſo to fail. In order to which, it will lie in my way to premiſe ſomewhat more of the Character of the Perſon.

Peter (we know) was a Man of Precedency, and *Above* the reſt of the Diſciples: And he was likewiſe one of ſuch Vertues and Qualifications, as ſeem to have recommended him to that Precedency, more than did the Advantage of his Years. He was a Man of real and tender Goodneſs: And this is ſufficiently evident from that Paſſage at his firſt Admiſſion to our Saviour's Acquaintance (St. *Luke* 5.) when being awakened by the miraculous Draught of Fiſhes, and knowing that the Author muſt neceſſarily be from God, he fell down at his Feet, and broke out into this humble and pious Reflection, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord!* The Cenſure indeed expreſſes him a *ſin-*

ful

ful Man; but ſo to cenſure *himſelf*, implies more effectually than any thing elſe could, that he was a Good Man: And though the Words --- *Depart from me* --- carry in them the Face of Fear, yet he who heard them, and knew the Heart of the Speaker, found that they carried in them a greater meaſure of Deſire; for, *Peter* was not willing to be rid of his new Gueſt, but only longing to be made more worthy of his Converſation.

He was a Man of great Love to his Maſter, and of no leſs Zeal for his Religion: Of which, from among many, I ſhall take one Inſtance, out of St. *John* 6. Where, upon the Deſertion of ſeveral other Diſciples, our Saviour puts the Queſtion to the Twelve, *Will ye alſo go away?* Then (ſays the Text) *Peter anſwered him, Lord, whither ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life.* An Anſwer ſo wiſe and faithful, ſo evidencing his confirmed Choice of the Better Part,

Part, that God ſeems to have rewarded him for it with the Grace of an immediate Revelation; the Matter whereof follows in the next Words: For thus runs the Text, *Lord, whither ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life*: And then it follows --- *And we believe, and are ſure that thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God.* Now if we look into St. *Matth.* 16. 17. we ſee there, what our Saviour pronounces concerning this very Confeſſion, (viz.) *Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah, for Fleſh and Blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* That our Saviour *had the words of eternal life, Peter* was able to deduce from the Principles of Natural Reaſon; becauſe Reaſon was able to judge from the Internal Characters of his Doctrine, That it was worthy of God, and accommodated properly to advance Humane Nature to eternal Happineſs: but for all this, Reaſon could not infallibly determine, that the Meſſenger of this Doctrine

ctrine was therefore the *Meſſias*, the ὁ υἱὸς, the *Son*, that is, *the eternal Son of the living God.* To know this, needed a new Illumination: And this Illumination (I ſay) it ſeems God vouchſafed him at that inſtant, as a Reward of that Faith and Choice which he had then declared.

In a word ---- *Peter* was a Man of Sincerity, Firmneſs, and Conſtancy: And for this we need no farther Teſtimony than that of our Saviour, in conferring upon him the Symbolical Name of *Cephas*, i. e. *a Rock.*

Thus much of this Character being premiſed, I may be bold to affirm of this his Reſolution in the Text, that it was as Honeſt a one, that is, both as Juſt in the Matter, and as Sincere in the Intention, as ever was made by any of Mankind, or ever ſhall be made to the End of the World; and yet this Reſolution miſcarried, and ended only in the Shame of the Reſolver: For after that

Peter

Peter had declared ſo ſtoutly --- *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee* ---- yet he faintly and Coward-like deny'd his Lord, without any ſuch Tryal as the imminent fear of dying.

Imagine we now, what may have been the cauſe of this miſcarriage, and the defeat of ſo good a Reſolution in ſo good a Man. His Character will not ſuffer us to imagine he made it in a braving Diſſimulation: No, himſelf proved himſelf ſufficiently in earneſt, by his ſubſequent behaviour in the Garden; where he drew his Sword againſt a whole Band of Men, and thereby made it appear that he had leſs concern for his own Life, than he had for his Maſter's Safety.

Would we know then how this Reſolution came to be abortive? The Reaſon was purely this ---- *Peter* grounded it upon too much Confidence in Himſelf; he never doubted of himſelf, but that he had power to perform that which he

he did ſo honeſtly reſolve; and this was the πρῶτον ψεῦδος, the original of all his failure.

He reſolved honeſtly, I ſay; but none may preſume to ſay, he reſolved wiſely: For his Lord had juſt admoniſh'd him of his peril of Lapſing, (*v.* 31.) *All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night*: To which *Peter* anſwers confidently, *Though all ſhould be offended, yet will not I be offended*: To check this Truſt in himſelf, our Saviour rejoyns --- That *He* in particular ſhould lapſe in a manner more ſcandalous than all the reſt; *Verily I ſay unto thee, before the Cock crow thou ſhalt deny me thrice*: But *Peter* looking upon this Monition no farther than as it imply'd a Reproach to his Faith, and his Love and his Courage, he ſummons them up all to form this final Reſolve, *Tho I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.*

But where was his Wiſdom, where was his Reflection, in the mean while?

It

It ſhould have been remembred, that he who precaution'd him, was *the Searcher of Hearts, and needed not that any ſhould teſtifie of Man, becauſe he knew what was in Man.* And therefore, in Wiſdom, *Peter* ought rather to have diſtruſted his own Heart; than the Judgment of his Lord, when he ſuggeſted that his Heart was deceiving. It ought to have been remembred, that his Lord had ſaid before---- *Without me ye can do nothing*; and therefore *Peter* in Wiſdom ſhould not have preſumed Ability in himſelf; but inſtead of this have implored Ability from him, whence all humane ſufficiency is derived----- *Lord, leave not me! that I may not leave thee! Lord, ſtrengthen me by thy Grace that I may not deny thee, and then I ſhall not deny thee.* In this method he had been ſecure, and prevented his ſhameful fall. But inſtead of this, he builds a Reſolution upon his own Strength; and our Lord, to rebuke him, did no other than leave him

to

to *his own ſtrength to perform it*; and this was, in effect, the ſame as to leave him under the neceſſity of *not* performing it.

For this is the main Leſſon that this inſtance teaches us, (*viz.*) that Man when he is left unto himſelf, is purely weak and inſufficient to any thing that is good.

Theſe two Points are evident in *Peter's* Caſe. 1. That he did not rightly know himſelf, when he made his Reſolution. And, 2. That the Defeat of his Reſolution taught him, that, notwithſtanding all his particular Graces and Endowments, he was not able to do any thing as he ſhould do, without God's actual Aſſiſtance. And therefore, for our preſent Inſtruction, I ſhall draw theſe two Obſervations from the Caſe. 1. That it is Hard to know our ſelves. And, 2. That to know our ſelves Truly, is to know that we are (and that in our beſt Eſtate) weak and inſufficient of our ſelves to do any thing that is good.

1. It is hard to know our ſelves.

By the Knowledge of our ſelves, I intend not the Knowledge of our mechanick Frame; to know by what Ligaments our Soul is united to our Body; or by what mediating Correſpondencies they act mutually upon one another; to know in what manner Senſation, or in what Remembrance is perform'd; what Springs ſet our involuntary Motions a-work; or what Influence our Will communicates to thoſe that are voluntary: To know this is not ſimply Hard, but impoſſible; and it ought to mortifie the Pride of any Man's Underſtanding, to conſider, that the ſmalleſt of the Parts we are compoſed of, and the leaſt of thoſe Acts we are always converſant with, which we ſee minutely, and live by their being done, do yet eſcape and ſurmount our Comprehenſion.

But if the Knowledge of this part of our ſelves be impoſſible, one thing we may

may infer from the benignity of Providence, that likewiſe it is not Needful. It would not conduce any thing to the Happineſs of Mankind, to be better acquainted with the Philoſophy of our Beings: nor do we ſuffer any thing from the Ignorance of it. The Soul acts as orderly in thoſe that never Enquire, as in thoſe that pretend to determine the chief place of its Reſidence: and our Pulſe beats as well when we think not of it at all, as when we think of it never ſo wiſely.

But the Knowledge here intended, is the Knowledge of our *Moral* ſelves; of our ſtate in reſpect of Vertue; whether we really chuſe to follow that which is Good, and what Firmneſs there is in our Choice; whether we make Proficiency in Religion, and whether there be Sincerity in our Pretences; what is the ſtate of our Wills, Inclinations, and Deſires; all which the Prophet *Jeremy* means by the word *Heart*, when he thus

pronounces concerning it, *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* Who can know it? Not a ſecond; not any one *without* us; this we are ſure of. But this is not all: We *our ſelves* can hardly know that Heart, which we carry in our *own* Breaſts: its Propenſions are retired and dark; and it is not eaſie to gueſs, whither the Bent of our Affections will carry us at any time, when their reſpective occaſions offer. Now to be ignorant of our ſelves in this reſpect, can never be of an indifferent importance. If we know not our ſelves, be ſure we ſhall neither diſapprove our ſelves, nor mend our ſelves; nor will natural Pride fail to take hold of the occaſion; that is, to make the beſt Interpretation of that which we leaſt diſcern: And ſo the more Ignorant we are of our ſelves, the more we ſhall come to be Opiniative and Conceited.

What falſe meaſures Men may take of themſelves, we are advertis'd in a remark-

remarkable Inſtance, *Rev.* 3. where our Lord ſpeaks of the *Laodiceans* in theſe words, *ver.* 17. *Thou ſay'ſt I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Now was not this a Judgment of themſelves wonderfully erroneous? Would one think it poſſible, that any Man ſhould not be able to diſcern between Riches and Poverty, Sight and Blindneſs, being Cloath'd and being Naked? We may juſtly think it impoſſible in the Literal Senſe; but how is it then in the Moral? Is it poſſible for a vicious Man to think himſelf Godly? Is it poſſible for the Churl to account himſelf Liberal? for the Senſual to account himſelf Heavenly-minded? for the Negligent to account himſelf Devout? Is not this equally hard? And yet the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſuggeſts, *Chap.* 32. 4. that *when the Eyes of them that ſee are dim, the Churl may account himſelf liberal;*

and ſo in the reſt: that is, When once indulged Affections have impoſed upon the Underſtanding, and darkned the Soul, and Men are thereupon content to take up with falſe Notions, and to judge of themſelves by falſe Rules, they *may come to* eſteem themſelves Good, though they *are* abſolutely Evil: They may think well of themſelves for ſome caſual Acts of Vertue, though in the mean time they live under the Habit of contrary Vices; They may account themſelves Religious, even while they are Carnal, Worldly, and Immoral: And yet to *be* Religious, and at the ſame time to be Immoral, implies as great a Contradiction, as is to be found between Riches and Poverty, Sight and Blindneſs.

But this indeed is a Deceit ſo groſs, that it cannot paſs upon an honeſt and conſiderate Mind: and therefore I ſhall produce ſome others, that are more refin'd and ſubtle, and ſuch as may eſcape

ſcape the Obſervation of a more ſcrupulous Enquiry into our ſelves. For example.

1. Even when we do well, it is hard to diſcern from what Principles we act; whether from the Fear and Love of God, which certainly ſanctifie; or from external Conſiderations, which ſanctifie not at all, but yet may occaſionally produce Actions of the ſame appearing Goodneſs.

When our Saviour entertained thoſe that came to hear him, with the multiply'd Loaves, and fed their Bodies as well as their Souls (St. *John* 6.) what a hearty Confeſſion did they break forth into, *ver.* 14. *This is of a truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the World.* How ſedulouſly did they follow him? What pains did they take to be with him? How did they repine at the miſſing his Converſation but a part of a day? Cou'd any one believe but that theſe were Diſciples mature and ſteady? and

prepared to confeſs their Maſter at the peril of their Lives? I queſtion not but they believed as much of themſelves; and look'd upon themſelves as influenc'd altogether with the Spirit of Religion: And yet no ſooner did our Saviour give them one juſt and gentle Rebuke, reproaching them for being more affected with his Loaves than with his Doctrine; and inſtructing them that God's Truth ought not to be follow'd mercenarily; But he diſcover'd their Feeble, their Cheat, till then unknown even to themſelves, and made them diſcover it to all the World; for 'tis ſaid (ver. 66.) *They took offence at it, and went back, and walk'd no more with him.* And thus it always falls out, when Vertue happens to be attended with Temporal Advantages, as Reputation, Favour, Fortunes, and the like; we can hardly tell, without farther Experiment of our ſelves, whether we regard Vertue for it ſelf, or only for its Advantages; or whether it

be Piety, or ſimple Appetite, that ſets us a-work.

2. It is hard to diſcern between a Religious State and a Religious Humour; a Religious State, that is founded ſteadily upon the Grace of God; and a Religious Humour, that ſprings up haſtily from the concurrence of outward Accidents, and is as deſultory and mutable as the Cauſe from which it ſprings.

How often does it happen, that Men upon the Succeſs of Affairs, and Eaſe of Circumſtances, find their Hearts fill'd with Expreſſions of Thankfulneſs to God, and Charity to all the World; and yet upon the change of Circumſtances, they immediately ſow'r both towards God and Man? Now if ſuch Men ſhall eſtimate themſelves during the Religious Mood, how is it poſſible but that they ſhould be deceived in the Opinion of their own ſtate? There is but one way poſſible to prevent their being deceived, and that is the bringing themſelves under

der the Probation of the voluntary Croſs, to the Offices of Mortification and Self-denial: But then how hard is it moreover to perſuade Men that they are obliged to this officious Probation?

3. It is hard to free our Judgment from thoſe Prejudices and extreme Mutations, which it is ſubject to receive from the different Craſis and State of our Animal Spirits. Thus ſometimes, when the Body is vigorous and gay, it ſhuts out that meaſure of Fear which is neceſſary to make us wiſe; and it ſuffers us not to ſee that Sin we are guilty of, and that lies at our door: And on the other hand, When the Spirits are dejected and low, they often let in ſuch an Exceſs of Fear, as *betrays the Succours of Reaſon;* and makes Men cruciate themſelves with the Apprehenſions of Sin, ev'n where there is really none. And hence we have ſometimes ſeen it come to paſs, that a Cordial Medicine has quieted a Mind, and ſet a grieved Conſcience at

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rights:

rights: Which Effect could not poſſibly proceed from that Cauſe, but upon the preſent Suppoſition, (*viz.*) That our Judgments are apt to be impos'd upon and miſled by the various Influences of our Body.

4. To judge of our ſelves without Proof and Tryal, is the ſure way to be deceived; and yet it is hard to diſcern what is the right Method of Proving our ſelves, and what is our proper Tryal.

What a fair Progreſs had that Man in the Goſpel made towards the Kingdom of God, who told our Saviour, *That he had kept all the Commandments from his Youth?* Nor did he tell it in Hypocriſie; for it is ſaid, that *our Saviour lov'd him*; which could not have been but for the Truth of what he told: and yet this Man could not bring himſelf over the Difficulty of parting with his Eſtate, and becoming a Diſciple, though he were promiſed the Recompenſe of

Treaſure

Treaſure in Heaven. How many have born up commendably under all the Preſſures of Afflictions, and at laſt ſunk in a Calm, and given themſelves up vanquiſh'd to the Enticements of Proſperity? Men of Courage, but not of Caution! And how many, on the other hand, have liv'd commendably in good Fortunes, and at laſt quitted their Vertue leſt their Fortunes ſhould be worſted? Men of Caution, but not of Courage. Thus, I ſay, No man can make a haſty Conjecture at what is his Proper Tryal. But,

5. When we *have prov'd* our ſelves, and ſo may *know* our ſelves; yet ſtill it is hard to *own* our ſelves for *ſuch*, as we have prov'd our ſelves to be.

For when we have prov'd our ſelves to the bottom, as we may do by the Doctrine of the Scripture, and our own Experience; we ſhall find our ſelves to be mere Weakneſs and Emptineſs, and without Power in our *Selves* to do any thing

thing well. Now though this be a Truth, than which the Word of God delivers none more plainly, nor can our own Experience atteſt any one more convincingly; yet there lurks in us a natural Pride, which makes us perfectly averſe from Believing it. We love to imagine our ſelves Great; inſomuch that we hate to know our ſelves *otherwiſe*; and had rather ſuſpect and find fault with the Glaſs that repreſents us under a diminiſhing form.

And this was properly *Peter's* Caſe: He had been told with the reſt, by his Maſter, That *without him he could do nothing*: But this was a Leſſon he had no Stomach to retain. He would not doubt but that his Will was in his own Power, and that his Executing Faculties were under the Power of his Will; ſo that what he had Courage to Reſolve, he had likewiſe Ability to Perform: And this fond Opinion expos'd him to that ſhameful Denyal which follow'd upon it.

After

After I have aſſerted, that it is *Hard* to know our ſelves, I am far from countenancing the ἀναπαλήθειαν, the belief that we *cannot* know our ſelves: This is a Notion fruitful of Miſchiefs: It is a Notion that hinders both Proficiency and Amendment; that is contrary both to Faith, and Hope, and Conſolation, without which Religion can have neither Fruit nor Root.

Know our ſelves we *Muſt*; God requires it; and therefore beſure know our ſelves we *May*: Nay, the Truth is we may eaſily know our ſelves, if we take the right Method to do it. For the common Obſtacle of Self-Knowledge is this; That when we go to examine and look into our ſelves, we look through the wrong End of the Glaſs: We ſeek for Greatneſs and Excellencies wherewithal to *pleaſe* our ſelves; and from this Proſpect we are ſure to reap nothing but Deceit: But let us turn the Glaſs, and look patiently upon our Little-

Littleneſs and Defects, whereby to *humble* our ſelves, and this Proſpect will certainly make us wiſe: For Humility is the True Knowledge of our ſelves; and he that knows himſelf to be nothing-worth, knows himſelf well. Which brings me upon my ſecond Propoſition; (*viz.*)

That to know our ſelves Truly, is to know that we are (and that in our beſt Eſtate) abſolutely weak and inſufficient towards Good.

Goodneſs is a Leſſon which ſimple Nature gives us not Capacity to learn. For ſince the ſtream of our Affections naturally runs to Ill, ſay, who it is that can *Turn* that Stream. *Quis poteſt facere mundum de immundo*, ſays Holy Job, *Who can make himſelf clean ſince he is born unclean?* If our *Nature* be ſinful, though it muſt be changed, yet *we* cannot change our Nature: He that makes us better, muſt be a ſuperiour and better Agent than our ſelves.

'T's

'Tis true, that though we are born Ignorant, we can make our ſelves Skilful; we can acquire Arts and Sciences by our own Diligence and Study: But the Caſe is not the ſame in reſpect of Goodneſs. We can acquire Arts and Sciences, becauſe we lie under no Connate Indiſpoſition to that Acquirement; for Nature, though it be corrupt, yet ſtill it is curious and buſie after Knowledge; but to Goodneſs we have naturally an Indiſpoſition that is Invincible: Luſts within and Temptations without ſet up ſuch a firm Confederacy againſt it, as we are never able to ſurmount in our own Strength. And therefore it is evident, that in order to ſave Mankind, the Holy Spirit vouchſafed to engage in the Work of Sanctification, as well as the Eternal Son did in that of Redemption, from the Beginning of the World.

When we do well, it is the Aſſiſtance of God that impowers us to concur in the

the Act; He removes the Hinderances; He reſtrains our oppoſing Luſts; He moves our Will, and draws us to it: And though, becauſe of the ſubſequent Concurrence, the *Act* is graciouſly imputed Ours, that ſo we may be intitled to the Reward; yet ſtill the *Power* is God's. Hereupon it is that the Apoſtle arguing againſt that miſchief that neceſſarily follows upon Humane Confidence, thus expreſſes himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. Ὁ δοκῶν ἑστάναι, &c. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.* Upon which Text a Critick of Name has given his Opinion, That the Participle δοκῶν is Redundant, and has no peculiar Signification, becauſe the Senſe of the Place is no more than this, *Let him that ſtandeth, take heed leaſt he fall.* But it ſeems to me rather that this Criticiſm is Redundant, and that δοκῶν has not only a Signification there, but the moſt Emphatical one that can be imagined: For take notice, that he that thinketh he

ſtandeth *in Goodneſs*, does but *think* ſo: For no Man *ſtands* in Goodneſs; he is only upheld and ſupported *there*, and graciouſly kept upright: Wherefore he that *thinketh* he *ſtands*, is for that very Reaſon more obnoxious to fall. And that the Apoſtle means no leſs in that place, let him be his own Interpreter, *Rom.* 11. 20. where he expreſſes the Manner how even the beſt of Men do ſtand (*viz.*) *Thou ſtandeſt by Faith.* Now he that ſtands by Faith, ſtands not by Himſelf; because Faith is properly a Recumbency or Reſt upon *another*. But to make the matter clearer, the Apoſtle illuſtrates it by a Reſemblance (*ver.* 17.) wherein he inſtructs us, that a Good Man *ſtands*, as *the Branch of a wild Olive does*, when it is *grafted into the Good* Olive Tree; and that is, not in its *own* Vertue, but in Vertue of the *Root*; and *ſuch* a Root as is naturally *not its own*. It is Remarkable that the Apoſtle, in that Paſſage, calls a Bad Man a *Wild Olive*

Olive Tree: a Wild Olive *Tree*; not barely a *Branch*, but a *Tree*; which having a Root of its own, ſupports it *ſelf*, and ſtands in its own Strength, and brings forth its own Fruit; and ſo does Man in reſpect of the wild and ſour Fruit of an ill Converſation: He is a *Tree*; has a Root of his own, and Sap and Vegetation, and Seminal Fruitfulneſs, and Power to bring it forth: But in reſpect of Good, he is only a Branch; and all his Fruitfulneſs, and all his Support, depend upon the Influence and Communications of God. You may ſee both the Doctrine and the Illuſtration of it, yet more fully expreſt by our Saviour in the beginning of the 15*th Chapter* of St. *John*.

We may therefore look upon *Sampſon* as a Common Emblem of the Diſpenſations of Grace; and all Men are fortify'd in their *Soul*, after the ſame manner that he was in his Body. (For Example:) His Strength lay not in his Sinews;

but was extrinſical, in his Locks; though thence communicated to his Sinews: and ſo our Moral Strength lies not in our Soul; for let Reaſon and Conſcience be never ſo well awaken'd, and our Will never ſo well inclin'd, and Practice and Cuſtom contribute all they can; yet ſtill our Soul has no ſtock of Strength intrinſick to it ſelf, by which it can ſuſtain it ſelf. Let the Supplies of Grace be once cut off, as it happen'd to *Sampſon*'s Locks, and (that moment) the Beſt *become weak as other Men.*

Philoſophy deceives us in reſpect of Religious Habits: There is no Habit of that kind *difficultly movable from the Subject*, by reaſon of any Strength that Practice introduceth into the Subject *it ſelf*: Our Facility of Acting *Religiouſly*, is both *acquired* and *maintained* by the Grace of God; and that Grace being once ſuſpended, the Habit ſinks in an inſtant. *Hezekiah* was an excellent Man; ſcarce is ſo much ſaid of the Piety of any Man

in

in Sacred Writ, as of *his*; and yet upon a ſudden, in a Tranſaction with the Embaſſadors of *Babylon*, he behav'd himſelf both vainly and profanely; inſomuch that (the Text ſays) *Wrath came upon him for it*; and by that Wrath he was ſenſible of his Fault, and thereby brought back again to his former Integrity. Now to let us underſtand how ſuch a diſagreeing Failure came to find place in the courſe of ſuch an excellent Life, the Holy Pen-man has taken care to tell us expreſly (2 *Chron.* 32. 34.) that *in that matter of the Embaſſadors, God left Hezekiah to himſelf; to try him, and to prove what was in his heart*; that is, To ſhew him to himſelf.---The very ſame was *Peter*'s Caſe; How Pious was he in the Houſe? How Couragious in the Garden? And yet in the Hall both a Coward and a Traditor? Now the Reaſon of all was---Becauſe his Maſter had, for that Interval, left him *to himſelf*: For the Text ſays, that *When*

the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, that is, look'd upon him with an Operative Compaſſion, *Peter* recovered his Strength; and exerted it in an immediate Repentance, and held it perſeveringly to a glorious end. ---- *Lord, what is Man? what is he without thee?* The Lord has told us plain enough in theſe Inſtances, What he is; *Ev'n a thing of nought.*

Let us imagine a Man to be Swimming, and becauſe he could not Swim without it, to be ſupported by the Chin; To make ſuch a Man ſink, there needs no dipping him, no laying Weights upon him, no hampering or entangling his Limbs; withdraw but the Hand, and he neceſſarily ſinks *of himſelf*. And in like manner, To make the Beſt Man fall, there needs no doing him any Wrong; no wounding his Faculties, no maiming his Judgment, no perverting his Will, no inflaming his Appetites, no heightning his Temptations:

Let

Let God barely withdraw his Supplies, and leave him *to himſelf*; that is, Permit him to the Power of his Natural Affections (which Affections Grace only covers and reſtrains, it never extinguiſhes during the courſe of this Life:) I ſay, Let a Man in the firmeſt ſtate of Vertue be barely permitted by God to the Power of his Natural Affections, he neceſſarily ſinks into the Level of Common Impotence without any other Influx.

This View of the State of Lapſed Nature, I have drawn chiefly from the Doctrine of the Goſpel. Not that I ſuppoſe the Notice of it to be confined to that part of the Scripture: For as it is a Truth that was always of Importance to be known, ſo we have little reaſon to believe but that it *was* known by the Church of God in all Ages from the Beginning.

In the Books of the Prophets, Nature's Inſufficiency to Good, as likewiſe

Isa. 26. 12. Isa 55. 1. &c. the Free Overtures of Grace to help it out, are plainly testify'd. And yet more plainly in the *Psalmist*; where all the Offices of the Holy Spirit conducing to Sanctification (as *Cleansing*, *Guiding*, *Helping*, *Renewing*, *Comforting*, *Strengthening*, *Establishing*) are mentioned as expresly as in the Gospel.

In the Writings of *Moses*, the Necessity of God's Assistance to Sanctification is delivered with formal Evidence: For after that God had instituted Circumcision as a Symbol of Purity, and had told the *Israelites* withal, That the true Discharge of their Duty towards him consisted in the Moral Circumcision of the Heart; *i. e.* In taking off their Love from the World, and placing it in the highest measure upon God; lest they should fail of their End, through Ignorance of their Means, and set about this great Work in Confidence of their own Ability, he *thus* instructs them,

Deut.

Deut. 30. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul.* Now what plainer words can be uſed to expreſs, That although they ſtood obliged to love God with all their heart, yet of Themſelves they were not able to work out this Iſſue; but that God was always ready to aſſiſt them to do it.

The *Striving* of God's Holy Spirit with Men for their Converſion, is ſpoken of as a known and received Truth before the Flood. And whereas it is ſaid of ſeveral of the Patriarchs, That *they walked with God*; the Expreſſion *with God* muſt reaſonably be interpreted to ſignifie *With God's Aſſiſtance*, as well as *According to his Will.*

Gen. 6. 3.

Gen 5. 22. Gen. 6. 9.

Farther than this .... Had I leiſure to gratifie the Curious, I have large room to make it appear, That this very Doctrine was familiarly eſpouſed by the Wiſe

Wiſe Men among the Heathen. Who, as they found by Conſcious Experience, That it was as little in a Man's Power to make himſelf Vertuous, as it was to make himſelf Fortunate; and as they likewiſe thought it ſuitable to the Goodneſs of God, to take Care of Man's Greater Good as well as of his Leſſer; ſo they eſpouſed this Belief of God's aſſiſting Men to Probity of Manners, as a Truth deducible from the firſt Principles of Reaſon. Accordingly *Plato* delivers it as a Rule received from *Socrates*, and laid down as a Fundamental in his Morality, That *Vertue was*, θεία μοῖρα, *a Divine Diſtribution*; and that Education, Precepts, Example, and Practical Diligence, were only partial Advances towards it; but that the State was got and finiſhed by the Concurrence of God. And what can be more expreſs, and withal more venerable, than that of *Seneca*, when he ſays, Nulla ſine Deo mens bona, *No Soul can be Good without the Divine Aſſiſtance.* But

But I have aſſerted my Point from a better Authority; and therefore thought it fit to engage no farther in this way of Proof, as being ſuperfluous in a Chriſtian Auditory.

Having then offered This as the True Proſpect of the State of Lapſed Nature; the next thing I purpoſe, is a Vindication of this State from ſuch Cavils as the Raſh, and ſuch Complaints as the Weak, are apt to conceive againſt it. And this I intend for the Subject of the following Diſcourſe.

SER-

SERMON II.

St. MATTH. XXVI. 35.

Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.

IN a former Diſcourſe upon this Text, I offer'd the Scriptural View and Account of Lapſed Nature; from whence it fully appears, that no Man is ſufficient either to be or to continue Good, *in his own Strength.*

Which is a Doctrine directly ſerving the Two great Ends of Religion: *viz.* To exalt the Glory of God; and to beat down all Pretences of Humane Pride.

But

But as all Truth is abuſable, ſo we may be aware that many eſpouſe this very Truth the more freely, only that they may the more freely form it into an Apology for careleſs Living. For Example, thus they argue: 'Our Na-'ture is indiſpoſed, perverſe, and inſuf-'ficient to Good; therefore, How mi-'ſerable is our Condition, thus to be 'maimed before we were born, and 'made guilty before we knew how to 'act, and obnoxious for doing that 'which we cannot help? How unac-'countably fatal was the Indiſcretion of 'our Firſt Parents, which gave occaſion 'to this Diſorder? And how unfortu-'nate their Poſterity, to whom it is de-'rived? Why did not God, with more 'appearance of Compaſſion, redinte-'grate our Nature after the Fall, and 'reſtore it to its Primitive Uprightneſs? 'How much better had his Service been 'provided for by this Method, and 'Man more happily prevented from his

'Diſ-

'Diſpleaſure? Which Diſpleaſure of 'his we cannot now avoid, unleſs it be 'by his own Act; whoſe Actings are 'not ſuppoſable to be at our Diſcreti-'on. Now it is certain, that all ſuch kind of Arguings are profane, and tend to nothing but the Diſhonour of God, and the Support and Countenance of Vice in the World: And therefore to obviate theſe Miſchiefs, and to carry on my Contemplation to its proper Uſefulneſs, I am obliged to enquire into the Reaſons --- *Why the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God thought fit to leave Mankind under this preſent ſtate of Weakneſs and Inſufficiency.* From which Enquiry I ſhall ſhow, 1. That *what God Chiefly intended thereby* was, *To oblige us more ſtrictly to live in a perpetual Dependance upon himſelf*; And, 2. *That ſuch a Dependance (put in Practice) will effectually cut off all poſſible pretences of humane Complaint.*

My firſt Buſineſs is, to enquire into the Reaſons why the Wiſdom and Good-

neſs

neſs of God thought fit to leave Mankind under this preſent ſtate of Weakneſs, Inſufficiency, and Diſorder.

We muſt allow, That God could have immediately reformed that Diſorder, which was brought upon our Nature by the Firſt Diſobedience; He could have check'd it in its firſt Authors, and not ſuffer'd it to be propagated to their Poſterity; but in the mean time it would be much too bold, for any one to ſay that this would have been the Better Method: For 'tis certain, that in things proceeding from God, that which *Is*, is always Beſt; though we ſometimes cannot penetrate into the Reaſons that make it ſo. But as to the preſent Inſtance, we may (with Reverence) penetrate into its Reaſons, and ſuch as muſt be allow'd of. *Ex. gr.*

1. Who can think but that when Sin had got footing in deſpight of God's Command, it was fit he ſhould leave ſome Teſtimony of his Diſpleaſure againſt

gainſt it? Now let me ſay at preſent, what I will prove afterwards, (*viz.*) That all the Weakneſs and Diſorder that remains upon our Nature (if its Miſchief be not farther extended by voluntary and choſen Malice) amounts to no more than ſuch a Teſtimony of God's Diſpleaſure againſt Sin.

There are ſome who believe, That all the Waſt and Cragginess, and other ſeeming Deformities which appear upon the Face of the Earthly Globe, were occaſioned by the violent Concuſſions that happened at *Noah*'s Flood. Now ſhould ſuch be ask'd a Reaſon, why God did not reſtore his Work to its original Beauty, they would think it ſufficient to ſay, 'Twas fit it ſhould ſtand ſo Monumentally, to deter future Ages from the like Provocations: And give me leave to ſay, it was fit that that Diſorder which Sin in its firſt Beginnings brought upon our Nature ſhould be left there, as a Monument of Caution againſt that Sin

Sin which occaſioned it; and which, if farther comply'd with, will bring on Diſorders much more deplorable than any we now feel.

Indeed it may be objected, that there is a great Diſparity between theſe two Iſſues, Diſorder left upon the Face of the Earth, and Diſorder left upon the Frame of Man: For the Earth feels no Miſery from the Deformity of its Surface; and when a Man looks upon the moſt craggy, ſquallid, or barren Parts of it, and reflects withal, that it is a Monument of God's Diſpleaſure, he may receive a wholſome Inſtruction *againſt* Sin, but no Temptation *to* Sin from ſuch a Proſpect: Whereas the Diſorder left upon *us*, is that whereby we *ſuffer*; it is the Fountain of our Miſery, and our continual Temptation; and ſo runs us upon that Diſpleaſure whereof it gives us Warning; and therefore we *Juſtly* complain of its Continuance.

This may be an Objection, and I confeſs it were, of weight, had God left Man helpleſs under the Influence of this Diſorder; and if, as we have propenſions to Sin, ſo we laid under a Neceſſity of following thoſe propenſions: But when it is conſidered, that at the ſame time God has covenanted for Grace to be our Remedy; and that he himſelf will give unto us whatſoever we want in our ſelves; the Objection (as popular as it is) appears to be fallacious; and (more than that) a Calumny againſt the Goodneſs of God.

For what Reaſon have we to complain of Natural Blindneſs, if *God* vouchſafes to be our Eyes and our Sight? Of Natural Impotence, if *He* will be our Defence and Support? Of Captivity to Luſts and Paſſions, if *He* be our Redeemer, and will ſet us free? Now God is faithful, who has promiſed to be all this unto us: and therefore if we complain, the Reproach of our Complaint

plaint muſt return upon our ſelves; and accordingly we ſhall find that they complain moſt of the Corruption of Nature, who would rather enjoy its Corruption, than uſe the appointed means to have it reformed.

2. The Goodneſs of God and his tender Care of humane Welfare, is more abundantly manifeſted in this our preſent ſtate of Weakneſs and Infirmity.

God made the firſt Man Upright; that is, in a ſtate wherein he could be good in virtue of his own Abilities: which is the great difference from ours, that we pretend to repine at. But if God at this time, though he do not make Man upright, yet vouchſafes to nurſe, guide, and train him to ſuch a ſtate of Uprightneſs as himſelf will be pleaſed withal; Who can ſay but the *Iſſue* is the ſame to Man? but moreover, the Care and Attendance upon him is infinitely greater.

If a Lord give his Servant an entire Eſtate, he diſcovers a kind and liberal Mind in ſo doing; but if (inſtead of this) he ſhall make daily Viſits to him, and from time to time provide him with what is fit; none can doubt but that in this Method he diſcovers a more conſtant and unwearied Love? It was a remarkable Proof of God's Favour to the *Iſraelites*, when by his Donation and Conduct he brought them to poſſeſs the Land of *Canaan*; but for all this, we muſt acknowledge that his Favour to them was more conſpicuous to the Obſervation both of themſelves and others, while he daily took care of their Meat and Drink, and indeficiency of their Cloathing in the naked and barren Wilderneſs. And this is an exact Emblem of our preſent Caſe. How daily, how minutely, how inceſſant, is the Vigilance and Proviſion of God for Man in this ſtate of Infirmity? Were any thing Laborious to Omnipotence, and

and could there be more and leſs of Pains, where all things are eaſie; I might ſay that God takes more pains to ſave any particular Soul, than he did to make, or does to govern the Univerſal World. He made the World by the Breath of his Command; and ſo he governs it: for it has no power to reſiſt. But where he has placed an Elective Power of Reſiſting, *There* to watch over that Power, to attend every Motion of our Hearts, to check every Evil, and to cheriſh every good one; to encourage it into Act, to reward it with Complacency, to propagate and eſtabliſh it by Supplies of that good Principle which firſt ſet it a-work; to feed, and lead, and drive, and diſcipline his Flock, to retrieve the Wandering, to wait upon the Tender and Weak, and to carry the Impotent upon his Shoulders (as he is pleas'd to ſymbolize his Care of Man under the Compariſon of the good Shepherd;) This is a Series of Care and

Attention as well as Love, which the Oeconomy of whole Nature beſides does not require.

This indeed is the moſt amazing Contemplation that can enter into our Thoughts; and which made Holy *Job* break out into thoſe words of Wonder, *Chap.* 7. 14. *Lord, what is man that thou ſhouldſt magnifie him, and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thy heart upon him? and that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?* This is the wonderful Goodneſs of God towards Man in his preſent ſtate; and this indeed is the *only* Title, that every Man ought to value himſelf upon; ev'n this, that God values him ſo much; but ſtill to be more humble, becauſe he can ſo little deſerve it.

3. A Third Reaſon why the VViſdom and Goodneſs of God thought fit to leave us under this ſtate of Infirmity, is this; (*viz.*) That he might thereby oblige us more ſtrictly to live in a perpetual

petual Dependance upon himſelf. And this is that Reaſon I ſhall chiefly inſiſt on, and proceed to ſhew what is the Nature and what the Fruits of this Dependance upon God.

There is a Dependance upon God which we may call Paſſive, becauſe it relates not to any Act of our Choice or Will; for we muſt depend upon him *whether we will or no.*

We *muſt* depend upon God for our Life, and for every moment of its Continuance. For let us love Life never ſo much, we cannot continue it to any Term or Period beyond God's Pleaſure and Deſignation. I mean not, that God has fixt a fatal Period to every Man's Life. The Notion of Fate diminiſhes from the Honour of Providence: but I mean that God, for the very Manifeſtation of his Providence, ſuffers not humane Life to wear out and determine according to the ordinary Laws of Nature; but takes the Meaſures of it into his own ar-

bitrary Diſpoſal, and either extends or ſhortens it as he ſees fit. We may obſerve of all other Creatures, that Nature governs the Meaſures of their Laſting; that (abating Violences) their Period is generally uniform, and they *wear out* their Thread of Life in proportion to that ſtrength of which it is ſpun. But Man ſeldom wears out his Thread, it is for the moſt part ſuddenly *cut off*; and Men die, perhaps in equal numbers every Year, through the whole Interval from the Cradle to mature Old Age.

Again, we depend upon God for all the Event and Succeſs of our Undertakings: And this is another Inſtance which God has ſelected to his own Diſpoſal, and exempted from the ordinary Laws of Nature, on purpoſe to give Teſtimony to his Providence in governing the World. For undoubtedly, it is but ſuitable to Nature's Law, that the *Race ſhould be to the Swift, and the Battle*

Battle to the Strong; That the beſt Contrivances and Means ſhould have the beſt Succeſs. And yet it often falls out otherwiſe in the Caſe of Man; where the wiſeſt Projects are defeated, and the moſt hopeful means are controul'd; and *Time and Chance happens unto all: Time and Chance, i. e.* At ſundry Times ſundry Events fall out, which they who look no farther than the Events themſelves, call *Chance*, becauſe they fall out quite contrary both to their Intentions and their Hopes; though at the ſame time, in reſpect of God's Providence over-ruling in theſe Events, it were profane to call them Chance, for they are pure Deſignation.

I may add farther, that we depend upon God for all our *Actions*: For ſince our *Life* depends upon God, and Life is our ſole Capacity of Acting, it muſt follow, that in reſpect of this Remote Cauſality all our Actions depend upon God. Yet I do not ſay that our Acti-

ons

ons do *ſo* depend upon God, as that we need his immediate Concurrence to all we do; or that we cannot exert any Motion or Senſation without his actual Aſſiſtance: Becauſe the Allowance of This would be attended with ſeveral abſurd Conſequences. For, 1. Suppoſing our Actions to be *Evil*, the imputing God's Concurrence to *ſuch*, would be a Reflection upon his Holineſs. And, 2. Suppoſing our Actions to be *Indifferent*; yet, to ſay that God's actual Concurrence is neceſſary to *ſuch*, is no other than a Diſparagement to his Workmanſhip; for it implies an Original Defect in his Creature.

To illuſtrate this matter by the Compoſitions of Art: it is the End and Deſign of a Watch to move, and by that Motion to diſtinguiſh Time: Now ſuppoſe an Artiſt ſhould make a Watch of never ſo curious a Figure, but yet ſuch a one as that its Index would not move unleſs he that made it obliged himſelf

himſelf to the perpetual Attendance of his Finger; what would our Cenſure be of ſuch a piece of Work?

To Move, to Feel, to Perceive, to Deliberate, Reſolve, and Execute, are Actions for which Man was deſigned; his Nature, Station, and Duty, charge them upon him: Now if we ſuppoſe Man not able to diſcharge thoſe Functions and Offices for which he was deſigned, without the perpetual Attendance of his Maker, how can ſuch a Creature be cleared from the Imputation of an Original Defect?

There is indeed another ſort of Actions in reſpect of which this Objection will not lie. All our Actions, ſo far as they are morally Good, depend ſo immediately upon God, that they require his actual Concurrence to the doing of them: And yet this does not imply an Original Defect in Man, but only a *Fall* from that Original Perfection wherein he was firſt made. And why

under

under this ſtate of Man's Depravation, the Divine Wiſdom choſe rather to aid and ſupport him by a perpetual Attendance, than to redintegrate him to his primitive Strength; is the particular Caſe, whereof I am now aſſigning the Reaſons.

I have ſpoken hitherto of our *Paſſive* Dependance upon God, our Dependance of Neceſſity; which therefore, as ſuch, can carry no Vertue in it: and yet it is the immediate matter of our active Dependance, ſo that one Turn of our *Will* can change our Neceſſity into Vertue. *Ex. gr.*

We depend upon God *whether we will or no*, whether we think of it or no; But then let us depend upon him *Intentionally*, *Willingly*, and we do That that is properly Religious, and what God will both Accept and Reward.

To induce us thus to husband our Neceſſity, and improve it wiſely into Vertue, let us conſider on this manner.

---We

.....We depend upon God for our Life and Being, and why ſhou'd we not *chuſe* to do ſo? For, did we depend upon Nature for it, Nature might give us a *long* Life, but ſhe cou'd not give us a *good* one; and then what would it be of Advantage to us that we have lived? Whereas now the ſame God that gives either a long Life or a ſhort, can make each of them to be an equal Bleſſing.

We depend upon God for the Succeſs of our Undertakings; and why ſhould we not *chuſe* to do ſo? Did we depend for it upon our own Wiſdom and Strength, by the ſame Rule, Every one that could over-power us or out-wit us, had it at his Diſcretion to defeat and undo us: VVhereas under the Diſpoſals of God we are guarded againſt theſe Iſſues of Common Enmity; and either our Undertakings are ſure to ſucceed; or elſe, what is better, we are ſure to reap Advantage from their Diſappointment; ſo long as our neceſſary Dependance upon God is ſanctify'd by a pious Reſolution

to

to depend upon him willingly, and to reſign our ſelves to his Diſpoſals.

We depend upon God for our power of Acting: and why ſhould we not *chuſe* to do ſo? ſince the ſame God that ſupports us in the power of Acting, is only able to regulate and conduct what we do to our Advantage; without which Iſſue, our power of acting muſt ſink and degenerate into a bare power of doing our ſelves harm.

But the principal Object of our Dependance is ſtill behind; and that is, *God's Grace, in order to our Sanctification*, and to enable us to diſcharge the Offices of Religion and Vertue.

To look and ſeek to God for this, is the main buſineſs of our Dependance; becauſe Grace is the Chief of all God's Benefits: So great a Benefit is the Grace of God, that there is no other Good *in Compariſon of it*; no other Good at all *without it*.

And

And therefore it is, that our Saviour, when arguing the Certainty of God's Paternal Love, from the Love that is generally obſervable in all Natural Parents, he thus expreſſes himſelf, *Luke* 11. 13. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more will your heavenly Father give* (give what? *give good gifts*; ſo the Antitheſis requires, and ſo one would think the Expreſſion ſhould run: but inſtead of this, it runs *thus, How much more will your heavenly Father give) the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Implying, that the Holy Spirit is equivalent to *all other* good Gifts; nay, as much *exceeding* them, as the Love and Power of God exceeds that of Man.

And therefore however we may eſteem Long Life and Proſperous Fortunes, yet ſo indifferent are they in the Event, that God beſtows them without any Indication either of his Love or Hatred (as that Paſſage of *Solomon* is to be interpreted

preted *Eccleſ.* 9. 1.) For God beſtows them not only upon the Good, but upon the Evil and the Unthankful; upon thoſe that ſeek them not from him; upon thoſe that do not acknowledge them as received at his hands; and finally, upon thoſe that are never the *better* for *having* received them; as will appear at the adjuſting of Accounts.

But on the other hand, *ſanctifying* Grace is a Pearl of greater Price than to be caſt away upon the Regardleſs. This is a Certain Benefit and a laſting Good; and therefore God diſpoſes it upon another ſort of Condition (*viz.*) *to them that ask him*; i. e. to them that wiſely eſtimate, and worthily value, and earneſtly deſire this excellent Gift.

And indeed when we conſider the Duty of Prayer, qualify'd with thoſe Circumſtances that the Holy Scripture does require, (*viz.*) That it muſt be *Inſtant*, *Fervent*, *Importunate*, *Violent*; we may conclude, that Prayer it ſelf is as certain

certain a *Proof* of the Communications of Grace, as it is a *Means* to procure them: For if we muſt pray *Inſtantly*, *Fervently*, *Importunately*, *Violently*, what are the Things we muſt pray for in this manner? No worldly Need can juſtifie ſuch a Deſire: Our Deſire of Life or any of its Accommodations, in *ſuch a meaſure*, would be Immoderate, Impatient, and Sinful; and therefore it is, that Submiſſion and Reſignation is preſcribed to our Requeſts, in reſpect of all *theſe things*: *Grace* therefore is the only Bleſſing that can be worthy *ſuch* a meaſure of Importunity: This alone we may deſire inſtantly, and with Impatience of Denial, and yet not exceed: Grace is *that Kingdom of Heaven that ſuffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by force.*

In this Office of Prayer, and in an Endeavour of Chriſtian-living ſuitable and comporting with it, (without which Comportment the Efficacy of

our Prayers muſt neceſſarily be voided;) I ſay, in theſe two Offices of praying for God's Grace, and walking in the Road of God's Grace, conſiſts the *Practice* of our Dependance upon him. The Fruits whereof I ſhall next enquire into; and ſhew, that through this Dependance upon God (which our preſent Weakneſs and Inſufficiency enforces) Man reaps greater Advantages from his preſent State, than could have been look'd for, had he been reſtored to the State of Primitive Perfection.

And to prove This, it will be Argument enough, if I ſhew Man has *now* Proviſion made, 1. For a ſafer Vertue; and, 2. For a more commendable Vertue; and, 3. For a more excellent Reward, than otherwiſe he could have had.

1. Man has now Proviſion made for a ſafer Vertue, than *Adam* had when he was firſt formed. *Adam* was *left in the hands of his own Counſel*; And ſo the Author

Author of *Eccluſ.* tells us, *Chap.* 15. 24. where he ſays, *God made Man* ἀπ' ἀρχῆς *from or in the beginning, and left him in the hands of his own Counſel,* &c. For if we interpret this Text to mean, that Man has Counſel, Wiſdom, Liberty or Strength, to chuſe and purſue all that is neceſſary to Godlineſs, I am ſure it can be apply'd to *no man ſince the Fall*: and this the whole Current of Sacred Writ makes demonſtrable.

But *Adam* was furniſhed with ſuch degrees of Perfection, that it was *fit* he ſhould be left in the hands of his own Counſel. But withal, we know that *Adam fell under his own hands*; and after he was once fall'n, after he had darken'd his Soul, weaken'd and poiſon'd his Nature, by giving up Reaſon to the power of appetite, he muſt neceſſarily have ſunk under the dominion of Sin, he muſt neceſſarily have grown more and more indulging, careleſs, deſperate, and without thoughts or power of Repenting,

(as the Caſe of the fall'n Angels was) had it not been for the Grace of that Covenant which was founded purely upon the occaſion of his Fall. For, all the ſubſequent Power that *Adam* had to pleaſe God, and to walk as a Man converted from the errour of his way from that time forward, iſſued not at all from the Strength of his Nature, as if Recovered by the means of Reflection; Nature was as much indiſpoſed and inſufficient to produce ſuch a Reconciling Change *in him*, as it is at this Day in any of his Poſterity.

And accordingly we may obſerve from the Hiſtory, That *before* the New Covenant was pronounc'd and ratified in the Promiſed Seed, there was no footſtep of Repentance that appear'd either in *Adam* or *Eve*; but merely a ſhifting off their Crime, as if in Deſign to preclude their Repentance; and therefore it appears, that all the ſubſequent Power that *Adam* had whereby to Repent, and to pleaſe God, did iſſue purely from the

the Succour of that Grace which God vouchſafed him in Compaſſion to his new-contracted Diſorder; and upon which he might now reſt for the Courſe of his future Obedience, with much more Security, than he could upon his *former Native* Perfections. Now to argue home to my Purpoſe.

Let us ſuppoſe, that after *Adam* had fall'n, yet (this notwithſtanding) God had ordain'd, that Original Uprightneſs ſhould have equally deſcended upon all his Poſterity; yet we muſt allow that any one of his Poſterity, though born with the ſame degrees of Uprightneſs that he *was*, might yet have been foil'd by the Wiles of the Tempter, and ſo have fall'n, ~~as well~~ as he *did*: Now had they ſo fall'n (I mean fall'n only perſonally and for themſelves) had they ſo fall'n, and in the mean while the Covenant of Grace not been founded (as it was only founded upon the Account of the Propagation of Sin) how

could any ſuch have ever recover'd to that State from which they fell, or indeed to any Degree of Acceptance with God? Their Caſe muſt have been as deſperate as that of the fall'n Angels was before; they would have follow'd the propenſion of Appetite, which was now made natural to them; and aimed at nothing more than to enjoy the Pleaſures of farther Depravation.

Whereas on the other hand, according to the preſent ſtate of things, and for the ſuccour of our Nature as it is now infirm, there is a Proviſion made through the New Covenant for a ſafer Adherence to Vertue; and *ſuch* a Proviſion as every Chriſtian may have the Benefit of; unleſs it be in the caſe of affected Slothfulneſs, and wilful Indulgence in Sin.

Sin indeed may more eaſily make its *firſt Breaches* upon us, by reaſon of our Preſent Infirmity; either through Ignorance or Surprize; but it cannot get

get Dominion over us without our own deliberate Option: For, it is an expreſs Goſpel-Promiſe, againſt the *Power* of *Sin*, that *it ſhall not have Dominion over us*; againſt the Power of the *Devil*, that *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World*; againſt the Power of Temptations, that *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer us to be Tempted above what we are able*; againſt Diſcouragement from the Pretext of our Infirmities, that *we may do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth us*; and in caſe of falling, *We have an Advocate with the Father, and a Propitiation for our Sins*: by means whereof, the Favour of God may be Regained, and that Principle of Grace Recovered, upon which (as upon a new Stock) we may grow good again, and to an entire Acceptance.

And now ſay, How could the Safety of humane Vertue be better provided for? Or, in caſe we want Vertue, of whom can we complain?

But, 2. The preſent ſtate of our Nature, weak and depraved as it is, gives Man the Opportunity of a more commendable Vertue.

From the ſtate of greater Uprightneſs and Order of Mind, and Compoſure of our Affections, we might expect more *elevated Thoughts*, *Conceptions* more worthy of God, *Acts of Adoration* more ſteady and affectionate, and a Diſcharge of Moral Duties leſs obnoxious to Errour and Interruption: But in the mean time the preſent ſtate of our Deficiency has no Reaſon to complain; when it is vouchſafed thus much of Indulgence, that the moſt abrupt Groanings of an humble Soul, preſt with Infirmities, and wreſtling with Temptations, and thence feelingly imploring the Aſſiſtance of God, is a more acceptable Sacrifice to him, than any Hymns that the moſt exalted Underſtanding can dictate, or any Office that the moſt compoſed Affections can perform.

Now

Now *Thus* it is, and *This* is the Reaſon of it, (*viz.*) Becauſe all the Notion we have of humane Vertue is this ---That it is a Conflict maintained by Rectify'd Reaſon againſt the lower Appetites: according to which Notion, the Holy Scripture calls the Chriſtian Life *a State of Warfare.* Now as Affections and Luſts do make the Oppoſition, and occaſion the Conflict, ſo it cannot be doubted, but that they give the great Commendation, if not the very Being, to our Vertue. To kill a Paſſion, to ſubdue a riſing Motion of Anger, Hatred, Pride, or Carnality, is the worthieſt Oblation we can offer to God; and the more of theſe we have to ſubdue, the more we have to offer: *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, ſays the Apoſtle; and thus we may interpret him ---The more Infirmities there are in our Nature, the more eminent Opportunities we have to be Conquerours in the Chriſtian Conflict.

Wiſh

Wiſh therefore we may, that Vertue were more *cheap*, or more *eaſie* to us; but we ought to remember, That at the ſame time we wiſh *away* that which gives Vertue her beſt Title both to preſent Commendation and future Reward.

Which is another Advantage of our preſent State, (*viz.*) That it makes way for a more Excellent Reward.

To diſpute whether *Adam*, if he had not ſinned, ſhould at ſome Period of his Earthly Life have been Tranſlated into Heaven, and there united to God in his Eternal Enjoyments, were only to be wiſe above what is written: if we will confine our Judgment to what is written; Nothing appears *there*, but that the *Promiſe of Heaven* was made in *Chriſt alone*, whoſe Undertaking for Mankind commenced purely upon the Occaſion of the Fall.

And if we obſerve the Order of that ſolemn Prayer, which our Saviour makes for

for his Diſciples and the ſucceeding Church, *Joh.* 17. where *ver.* 17. he prays, *Holy Father, ſanctifie them by thy Truth*; and after this, in a diſtinct Requeſt, at *ver.* 24. he ſays, *Father, I will that they whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am*: We may reaſonably argue from This, That the utmoſt Sanctification humane Nature is capable of, carries in it no Pretenſions to Heaven; but that This is a Title that riſes ſimply from the Compact of our Lord's Mediation.

It is manifeſtly evident from frequent Paſſages of Holy Writ, That (although not ſimply *Bliſs it ſelf*, yet) the *higheſt degrees* of Bliſs are annex'd to the Doctrine of the Croſs; to Afflictions, Sufferings, and Self-Denial; none of which had any Place or Occaſion, had it not been for the *Depravation* of our Nature: For their End is perfectly Medicinal, and deſign'd to correct that *Depravation*, and to bring us to the

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Vertues of Patience and Humility; Vertues which we are naturally averſe from, and yet they are neceſſary to reform and ſanctifie our Nature.

Now if Afflictions, Sufferings, and Self Denial, are the things which are ſaid to *work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, and yet all theſe Methods of Diſcipline draw their Uſefulneſs from the very State of our Corruption; it cannot be denied but that this preſent State of ours does give occaſion and make way for a more excellent Reward, than Man *Undepraved* could ever have hoped for.

What Room is there then for complaining of our Condition? What for Reviling Our firſt Parents? What for Cenſuring the divine Diſpoſal of Things? Our Nature is burden'd with Weakneſs and Diſorder, but it has its Remedy in a Religious Dependance, which is able to turn all to Advantage. And therefore to do right to this Contemplation,

we ought to close it with Acknowledgment and Wonder..... *Oh the depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Goodness of God!*

To whom be Glory, &c.

A

SERMON

Concerning

The Holy Contemplative.

St. LUKE II. 19.

But Mary kept all these ſayings, and pondered them in her heart.

NEither the Intimations of Holy Scripture, nor the practice of the Primitive Church, nor the correſponding Doctrine of our own, will ſuffer any of us to doubt but that we ought to pay a proper honour to the departed Saints; and amongſt them (in eſpecial manner) to the Bleſſed Virgin,

gin, the Mother of our Lord. But what is the Nature, and the Meaſure of that Honour we ought to pay them, may well admit of a Queſtion. Shall we give them the Honour of our Prayers, and truſt upon them for the Returns either of Temporal or Spiritual good things? The Word of God remonſtrates againſt it; nor can the Piety of the Saints themſelves be preſumed to bear it: For, the more highly they are exalted in Heaven, the more deeply ſenſible they are of God's bounty, and the more engaged in his Love, and the more Jealous of his Honour; and therefore they cannot but the more indignate and abhorr any Acts of Worſhip done to themſelves, which may any way invade the Incommunicable Rights of God.

Shall we give them the Honour of a Civil Invocation, and pray to them to pray for us; as we commendably may to our Brethren in the Fleſh? Why this

this we *would* do, but that our Rule is ſilent; which certainly is not ſilent in any Duty of Importance: And beſides that our Rule is ſilent, the Practice is not ſafe.

We have no diminiſhing thoughts of the prevalence of the Prayers of Saints; but we think that the Charity of their Prayers is more Spontaneous and Free than to ſtay for the Motive of our Solicitation: They pray for us unſought to; and we come to enjoy the benefit of their Prayers not for the having deſired them but by living towards them; for by keeping our ſelves vitally United to the Chriſtian body, we keep our ſelves in the Communion of the Virtue and Offices of every Member.

Indeed to deſire the Prayers of our Brethren, here below, is a Duty Commanded; becauſe it is an Office in it ſelf Neceſſary for the Improvement of Human Charity, Humility and Edification; and we are ſure it is an Office well

well accepted of, becauſe it is Commanded: But in deſiring the Prayers of the Church Triumphant, we are not ſecure of any iſſue ſo much as this (*viz.*) Innovating in the rule of Worſhip; loſing our pains by not being heard; laying in a Stock for Superſtition to grow upon; and alienating our minds from their Immediate Love and Dependance upon God.

Finally then --- ſhall we Honour the Saints departed with our Praiſes and Gratulations and Mentions of Reſpect; admiring their Virtues, and rejoycing at their bliſs? This we ought to do, we *muſt* do; but this alone is not ſufficient. To praiſe Saints with unſanctify'd lips is neither a comely, nor yet a grateful Service: To commend the Vertues we do not eſpouſe is a Kind of Hypocriſy, they would nauſeate and grieve at: and to rejoyce at their enjoyment of that bliſs, which we do not prepare and qualify our ſelves to enjoy, is a piece of

ſottiſhneſs, which if they are not Ignorant of, they do certainly bewail. Would we therefore pay a ſuitable Honour unto Saints, and ſuch as themſelves would preſcribe and approve of; there remains but one method, and that is the Imitation of their Vertues. For Imitation is in it ſelf the moſt real Honour we can beſtow, and no greater ſign of the Veneration of a Perſon, than the propoſing him for our Example. And it is therefore that I propoſe to you to Honour the Bleſſed Virgin, by ſetting her before you for an Example of Holy Contemplation; a Practice of Hers intimated in the Text. *Mary kept*, &c.

The things related to are thoſe mentioned by the Evangeliſt in the foregoing Part of the Chapter, (*viz.*) the great vouchſafement of God to her ſelf, in making her a miraculous Mother; his great vouchſafement to the World in making her Son a Common Saviour; and his great vouchſafement to the humble

ble Shepherds in choſing them for thoſe to whom the Angels ſhould declare this joyful news: *Theſe things ſhe kept and pondered in her Heart.*

But it was not onely in theſe things, and at this Time, that ſhe thus imployed her Meditation; it was her habitual uſage when any thing of the ſame pious concern offered it ſelf, to entertain it and keep it upon her Thoughts; which we may ſee confirm'd in the next Paſſage of her Hiſtory in the following Part of the Chapter; Where we are told that when ſhe accompany'd her Son to *Jeruſalem* at 12 years Old, and there heard his Diſcourſes with the Doctors in the Temple, the Evangeliſt makes the ſame Remark upon her again, *that ſhe kept all theſe ſayings in her Heart*, v. 51. Theſe Paſſages confirm it to our Obſervation, that the Bleſſed Virgin, was a Holy Contemplative, that ſhe took a ſtated care for this Imployment of her Thoughts; and in this

particular it is that I ſhall recommend her to your Imitation.

And for the Method of my Diſcourſe I ſhall (1.) ſpeak of the General Difference of Thoughts: *Mary* thought emphatically *on theſe things*; as others do on things of another Nature.

(2.) I ſhall ſpeak of the Management of Thoughts in order to profit by them: *Mary kept and pondered them in her Heart.* And,

(3.) I ſhall Repreſent the uſefulneſs of this Practice, in order to inforce it.

1. The general Difference of Thoughts, and of the multitude of different Thoughts which take up men's Minds and Time with as different ſucceſs. I ſhall give you a ſhort view under theſe Five heads, (*viz.*) there are Thoughts that *Defile*; and Thoughts that *Betray*; and Thoughts that *Illude*; and Thoughts that *Amuze*; and Thoughts that *Sanctifie*.

1. There are Thoughts that *Defile*: and

and theſe (as our Saviour tells us) are *Evil Thoughts*, (viz.) Thoughts that carry Sin in their Nature: as when a Man feeds Concupiſcence in his Mind, with the Imaginations of Luſt; or nouriſhes Intemperance with fanſy'd Delicacies; or entertains Pride the Conceit of Worth; or Gratifies ſubtilty with the Plots of Supplanting; or pleaſes Malice with the Contrivance of Revenge! Or when the mind having made it ſelf ſenſual by the adheſion and teint of ſenſual Objects, begins to think with *Solomon*'s Libertine (*Wiſdom*) that perhaps we may die as the Beaſts do, *ſoul and all*; and ſo be ſecure from a future account; Or elſe (with the other in the Pſalmiſt) that poſſibly *God may be ſuch a one as our ſelves*; that is, either *ſhort* in Knowledge, or Feeble in Juſtice, or Fond in Mercy; and ſo be Reconcilable to us together with our Sins: theſe are Thoughts that Blacken and Bemire the Soul; and lay in Proviſion

for the never-dying Worm to feed on: For our ſinful Thoughts *Here*, do *in the next World* naturally change into the Laſhes of a fruitleſs Remorſe.

2. There are Thoughts that *Betray*: and theſe are *Vain* Thoughts; not ſuch as are Evil in their own Nature, but ſuch as tempt and lead on to Evil. And therefore Vanity is by the Prophet, (*Iſ.* 1.) called the *Cord of Iniquity*; becauſe, thro' occaſions Adminiſtred by Vanity, Men draw Iniquity upon themſelves. And theſe take place when men give up their minds to purſue Glory and Greatneſs, the envy'd Ornaments of Human Life: When they caſt about and form deſigns how they may Poſſibly compaſs the Reputation of Wiſdom or Wit, or Policy, or Learning; and ſo build themſelves a Pillar of Glory: When they project Schemes of growing Great, and Study the Arts of Advancement; and pleaſe themſelves with thinking how fine, how eaſy it will be with them,

them, when ſuch and ſuch acceſſions are come in to their Fortunes. Theſe are Imaginations that ſwell up the Bubble; that make Man fond and conceited of himſelf; till ſuch time as the Bubble comes to be prick'd by the Dart of Death; and then all his Greatneſs evaporates, all his Expectations vaniſh, or (as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it) *all his Thoughts periſh*: and how can they do otherwiſe, when they are all ſet upon periſhable Things.

3. There are Thoughts that Illude; that is, mock and impoſe upon the Thinker. And theſe are Impertinent Thoughts; wherein Men are wiſe *for Others*; contrary to the Character of of thoſe that are wiſe *indeed*, who (*Solomon* tells us) are *wiſe for Themſelves*. Thus men think how, if they were Kings, they could compoſe the State; if they were Popes, how they could accommodate Religion; if they were of Council how they could adviſe for the

better; if they were of the Church, how they could Promote the Concerns of Faith; if they were of the Shop, how they would abandon the uſual ſhifts of Trade; if they were of the Bar, how they would renounce the Common Prevarications of Pleading; if they were any thing but *what they are*, how Beneficial they would be in their Generation. All ſuch wandring Thoughts as theſe keep Men *from Home*, and *out of Themſelves*; and unprofitable in their own Stations, and ſuit them onely to that Character that the Apoſtle gives to ſome of his *Theſſalonians*, 2 *Ep.* 3. 11. where he ſays--- they were μηδὲν ἐργαζόμενοι, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζόμενοι, Buſy bodies, but did no Buſineſs.

4. There are Thoughts that *Amuze*: that is, ſuch Thoughts as have neither Evil, nor Vanity, nor Impertinence in them, but onely take up the Mind; and *that* Commendably ſo long as within their due Meaſures; but if they

they exceed, they turn to miſchief: and theſe are Thoughts about the neceſſary things of Life; and the ſpending our Time whether in honeſt Imployments, or inoffenſive Diverſions, or decent Reſpects to thoſe that are about us: In ſuch Thoughts as theſe the Mind when taken up, is indeed Innocent, but yet not Religious; it is (as I may take the Gage of its Condition from the Parable in the Goſpel, it is) a Virgin, but yet a Fooliſh one; it is not laying up the Proviſion of Oyl which may ſhine before it into the Preſence of the Bridegroom; this Beſt and only neceſſary Buſineſs remains to be learnt from the wiſe Virgins, or the wiſeſt of them, the Virgin in the Text, whoſe cuſtom it was to give up her Mind to Thoughts that *Sanctify*: the laſt kind of Thoughts I mention'd, that is, Good and Religious Thoughts. Theſe *things ſhe kept and pondered in her Heart*, (viz.) the things that belonged to her Peace; the

the Mercies of Providence, the Inſtructions of Truth, the Precepts of Wiſdom, the Concerns of Eternity; *Whatſoever things were Honeſt, whatſoever things were Juſt, whatſoever things were Pure, whatſoever things were Lovely, whatſoever things were of good Report; if there were any Virtue, if there were Praiſe,* i. e. If there were any thing that carry'd Virtue in its Nature, and the Praiſe of God for its Reward; *ſuch Things ſhe* thought upon; and this is our Example.

But to bring the Example yet cloſer to our Imitation, I muſt view another Circumſtance of it; and that is *the Bleſſed Virgins Management of her Thoughts,* imply'd in theſe two Words, *She kept,* and *ſhe pondered; ſhe kept all theſe Things,* &c.

To have a thing upon the mind is formally to think; but to *Keep* that thing there is *More*; 'Tis to think *laſtingly* upon it, and to fix the Impreſſion of it: But yet more than this is imply'd

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in the word *Pondered*, and that *in her Heart*; it implies that ſhe diſcuſs'd the Reaſon and End of theſe things, and ſo apply'd them to her Conſcience, and ſo grew better by the thoughts of them. From which Part of the Example I infer — That the right Improvement of Good thoughts conſiſts in theſe Two Acts, 1. Fixing them in the mind, and 2. Applying them to the Conſcience, or (in the Word of the Text) to the Heart; that is, the ſeat of Affection and Deſire.

The firſt Act neceſſary to the Improvement of Good thoughts is to Fix them upon the mind, or to *Keep* them there.

Our Saviour in the Parable of *the Sower* tells us of ſome men's minds that they are *like the High Way*, where the Good ſeed could never take Root, but was pick'd up again by the *Fowls of the Air*: and ſuch are they whoſe Thoughts are always Rowling; in whoſe minds

Good

Good Thoughts never *Dwell*, they only *paſs* as men do upon the Road. Now the firſt Step to fruitfulneſs in Religion is to fix Good Thoughts, to bind and devote our Minds to the Contemplation of Holy Things; and when they are ſo Devoted, to Drive away the Fowls, that would ſnatch up the Good ſeed, as *Abraham* is ſaid to have driven them away from his Sacrifice, *Gen.* 15. Where the Gloſſators (in their Allegorical way of Interpreting) ſay that by his Fowls are meant *Importunæ Cogitationes*, Importunate and buſy Thoughts, which either from the Natural bent of our Minds, or the Injection of the Devil, are apt to obtrude upon us and diſtract us at ſuch ſeaſons.

We muſt therefore throughly convince our ſelves of the Indifference of all Preſent things in compariſon to the Future; and bend and oblige our Thoughts to the Contemplation of the Future, till ſuch time as we find them

keep

keep their Bent, and apply themſelves to their Object (as all thoughts made habitual will do) without the need of any force or any Remembrance: Cuſtom, which is neceſſary to procure ſteadineſs, Facility and Delight in the doing of any thing, will procure the ſame in the doing of this; And by inuring our ſelves to Good thoughts, the Reluctancy will ceale; and we ſhall be able to think well, both with firmneſs and with pleaſure.

The ſucceſs of this neceſſary Office is hindered by nothing ſo much as by the want of aſſigning Stated ſeaſons to the Practice of it. We let our Time run out, not by Rule, but by *Chance*, being Satisfy'd at Preſent that we *Intend* to imploy it as we ought: But in the mean time we ſuffer ſo many delays, that our very Intention exhales, and our purpoſes to think well extinguiſh for want of thinking; as ſparks go out for want of Fuel: *i. e.* We will give our

ſelves

ſelves to Holy Meditation to *Day*, if we are not importunately prevented; and if it happens we are ſo prevented, we lay in the ſame Intention for to morrow; But they who are no better reſolved upon their Work; they who make the Grace of God wait upon and ſubmit to all the Emergencies of Worldly buſineſs, will be ſure *always* to be prevented.

It is therefore of neceſſary Importance to Religion to fix Rules for the Imployment of our Time, and among theſe to allot a ſeaſon to Meditate on Heavenly things: Whereof we muſt require a juſt account of our ſelves, and never break the Law of our task without exacting a compenſation for the Breach.

God (we know) has appointed a Day of Sabbath, and the Church has appointed her Feſtivals and Faſts; and they that argue againſt the Reſpective Obſervation of theſe, argue Truly *thus far*; they ſay that God ought to be Worſhip-

ſhipped *every day*, which is the Buſineſs of the Sabbath; and his Benefits to be Commemorated every day, which is the buſineſs of the Feſtivals; and our Sins to be reflected on every day, which is the buſineſs of the Faſts; all theſe ought to be done *every Day*; and in this they ſay Truly: But yet they overlook the main Leſſon which both God and the Church teaches us in the Deſignation of particular Days, and that is this, (*viz.*) That what is neceſſary to be done, ought not to be left to Man's diſcretion for the Time of doing it; But the Time ought to be fixt; leaſt by the ſpecious delays, that Man's deceitful heart is always able to ſuggeſt, it may poſſibly come to be Neglected altogether.

I conclude therefore on this Head that Stated ſeaſons of Meditation are neceſſary to keep Good Thoughts upon our mind, and to fix them till ſuch time as they become habitual and recur of their own accord.

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And yet this is not enough: Good Thoughts while they are only Floating in the Head may chance to make us never the better, they muſt be ſunk into the Conſcience before they bring any certain improvement: And this is the 2d. Act we find in the Bleſſed Virgins, Example --- *ſhe Pondered them in her Heart*; She weighed the Uſes and Ends and Advantages of thoſe Divine things ſhe thought on, and ſo recommended them to her Heart, where they lay waiting and longing for the opportunities of Action.

There is oftentimes a Prodigious diſtance betwixt a Man's Head and his Heart; ſuch a diſtance that they ſeem not to have any *Correſpondence*; not to belong to the ſame Perſon, not to converſe in the ſame World. Our Heads are ſometimes in Heaven, Contemplating the Nature of God, the Bleſſedneſs of Saints, the State of Eternity; while our Hearts are held Captive below in a Conver-

Converſation *Earthly, Senſual, Deviliſh.* 'Tis poſſible we may ſometimes commend Vertue convincingly, unanſwerably; and yet our own Hearts be never affected with our own Arguments: we may Repreſent vice in her Native dreſs of Horrour; and yet our Hearts be not at all ſtartled with their own Menaces: We may Study and Acquaint our ſelves with all the Truths of Religion; and yet all this out of Curioſity, or Hypocriſy, or Oſtentation; not out of the Power of Godlineſs, or the ſerious purpoſe of good Living. All which is a ſufficient proof that the Conſent of the Head and of the Heart are Two different things; and to procure them there is need of a different application; ſuch as we find intimated in our Example of the Text; whoſe Practice it was, to make Good thoughts paſs from her head into her Heart.

Among the Ceremonial Laws of *Moſes* (whereof the Allegorical was the

moſt proper and principal interpretation, and according to which ſenſe they were chiefly to be obſerv'd) this was one -- That no Beaſt ſhould be accounted clean, but ſuch as had theſe Two Qualities, Cleaving of the Hoof, and Chewing of the Cudd? And theſe two Qualities in the Beaſt were only Symbols of theſe two Acts in Men which I am now treating of. Dividing the Hoof was a Symbol of the Act of Diſcerning between Good and Evil, that is, Contemplative knowledge; and Chewing the Cudd was Symbolical of the Act of applying what we know unto Practice; and both theſe are neceſſary to make a clean Man: We muſt not only Contemplate Good things till ſuch time as our Thoughts come to be Wiſe and Diſcerning; but we muſt *Ponder* their Uſe and Importances till ſuch time as our Hearts come to be ſeaſoned with them; till ſuch time as they come to affect and move us, and determine our Practice:

and

and then our Thoughts will be Good indeed, that is, they will not be Abortive, but they will bring forth fruit to Perfection.

This then is the Duty we are to learn from the Example of the Text, (*viz.*) to inure our ſelves to the Contemplation of Holy things; of all God's Providences general and particular, of all his Inſtructions and Commands, Threats and Promiſes; of our own Natural frailty as well as Moral infirmity; of the different Iſſues of Sin and Righteouſneſs, and the everlaſting Concerns of a Future Life: To think of theſe things, and to keep and Ponder and Sink them into our Hearts, till ſuch time as our Conſciences take a Sanctifying ſeaſon from them. This is the Duty: --- And now it ſhall be the reſt of my buſineſs to recommend this Duty to Practice, from the Conſideration of its uſefulneſs, which I ſhall ſhew in reference to all Human Actions.

Human Actions are by the Moraliſts divided into Three kinds, Good, Evil, and Indifferent: Now holy Meditation and the Cuſtomary Entertainment of good Thoughts bears a ſeveral importance to each of theſe; which I ſhall ſhew ſeverally; beginning with the Good.

By good Actions I mean all thoſe we ſtand obliged to by the Nature of our Religion; ſuch as are the Offices of Devotion, and the Practice of Virtue.

As for the Offices of Devotion, we know they cannot be acceptable for the outward work, but only for the Spirit and Affection with which they are performed. In the Jewiſh Temple it was the Law of the Altar of Burnt ſacrifices, *Lev.* 6. 13. that the Fire upon it ſhould be always burning, *it ſhould never go out.* In the time of Oblation the holy Fire did flame and blaze, but even in the intervals it was never extinguiſh'd, it was kept in a perpetual readineſs for

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the next Oblation. Now this ever-burning Altar is the juſt Emblem of a Chriſtian heart, when affected ſo as it ought to be towards God: For according to that aweful Definition that St. *Peter* gives of a Chriſtian, 1 *Ep.* 2. 5. That *He is a Holy Prieſt to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*; every Chriſtian is a Perſon devoted and Conſecrated to *offer* unto God, and his Oblation is a Burning, that is, an Affectionate Heart; a Heart that muſt burn intenſly at the Offices of Devotion; but even in the intervals muſt never Chill; the ſparks, that is, the Diſpoſition to theſe Offices muſt ſtill be kept alive. Now if this holy Fire be neceſſary to recommend our Sacrifice, and the maintaining of this Fire be neceſſary to keep our heart in Preparation for this Service, *as it* is; from whence (think you) ſhall we get this Fire? From whence ſhall we maintain it? There is ſurely none ſuch to be

found in our Natural Temper, and we have as little reaſon to expect it from meer infuſion: it muſt come from Heaven (as that material Fire in the Temple originally did) and yet it will never come without our own procuring: the freeſt Irradiations of the Divine Grace will never kindle it in us without our own Act, without the uſe of proper means, and thoſe means conſiſt altogether in entertaining Good thoughts and holy Meditation: *While I was Muzing* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *the Fire kindled:* Muzing, thinking, Meditation is like the Burning-glaſs that will gather, unite, amaſs the ſcattered Beams of the Divine bounty, that are always round about us, and Dart them into our Soul, and kindle the fire there: which beams ſo long as they lie only ſcattered about us (as they always do to the unthinking) their influence is not felt, they are loſt to us, they can never Adminiſter ſo much Heat as wherewith to make our Altar

Altar burn, or our Sacrifice ſend forth a Savour of Acceptance.

And, 2. as for the Practice of Vertue, (which in the common Style of the Scripture is called Righteouſneſs) our Saviour tells us that the only way to arrive to that proficiency that is neceſſary in it, is *to Hunger and Thirſt after it*: the ſoul that can conceive ſuch a deſire towards Righteouſneſs, as the Body is naturally endow'd with towards its neceſſary food; a deſire which we all feel to be quick, and Active, and Maſtering all other Appetites; a deſire that will return upon us, and twitch us, and put us in mind of it ſelf, and never ſuffer us to forget it; a deſire which we can neither bribe nor baffle, nor flatter, nor divert, nor any way ſatisfy but by the enjoyment of its proper Object: Now the ſoul that conceives ſuch a deſire to Righteouſneſs as this, ſhall aſſuredly be Righteous. But how then ſhall we conceive ſuch a deſire? We are not born with

it; nor is Fleſh and Blood acquainted with any ſuch Appetite: the Amiableneſs of Vertue is not matter of ſenſe; and its chief Benefits are Diſtant and Future; and the Advantages whereby it mainly attracts us do not yet *Exiſt* but only in Contemplation; and if therefore we ſhall Neglect to Contemplate them; if we ſhall Neglect to bring things diſtant Home to us by thinking; if we ſhall Neglect to confirm our minds by the frequent proſpect of Eternity, and to ſweeten the uneaſineſs of preſent things with the Expectation of thoſe that are to ſucceed; it is impoſſible but that Vertue ſhould loſe its Power over us; its attraction and deſirableneſs muſt neceſſarily diſappear; and our ſouls will run loſe to the entertainment of any pleaſures that are nearer at hand.

The leſs we are thoughtful, the more we muſt neceſſarily advance the Dominion of Senſe; whoſe Aims and Intereſts are perfectly oppoſite to thoſe of Righ-

Righteouſneſs. The Soul of Man is born an infant in Goodneſs, as his Body is in Dimenſion; and there are ſeveral Meaſures of Moral proficiency thro' which it muſt grow before it can arrive at the Stature of Man-hood in Chriſt; and its proper food all along whereby it muſt grow to this Perfection, is the Word of God (as St. *Peter* tells us) and the Works of his Providence; the Word of God, I ſay, and the Works of his Providence, are the proper food of the Soul; but then Contemplation all the while is her Stomach by which that food is prepared for Digeſtion; and without which there muſt be famine in the midſt of plenty.

It is neceſſary therefore that we enter into our ſelves, and commune with our hearts, and inform and prepare them for Action by the influence of habitual Good thoughts; or elſe we ſhall never be able to do any good thing as we ought: We ſhall never be able to perform a Rea-

a Reaſonable Service to God; we ſhall only offer him the Sacrifice of Fools; We ſhall be *even as Beaſts before him*, drawn into his preſence only by the force of Cuſtom, or Company, or the ſound of a Bell, the juſt Emblem of our Prayers without Affection; while our hearts will be ever ſtarting from that buſineſs to which they are ſo ſeldom and ſo ſlightly engaged. We ſhall never be able to acquit our ſelves in the Practice of Vertue; our Hearts will never be there to commend what we do, or to make it laſting; but when we do a good Office, either Deſign, or Glory, or Unwillingneſs, or Uneaſineſs, or Regret will creep in and ſully it; and thus acting like men of double minds, of two Souls, we ſhall deflour all the Good of good Actions in the Doing.

I paſs to ſhew the uſefulneſs of the Duty in reference to *Evil Actions*: againſt which none can doubt but that Good thoughts are the beſt Preſervative: nor

nor am I going to *prove* the thing, but only to ſhew the Method of it. Good thoughts then, or Stated Meditation on Good things are a ſure Preſervative againſt Evil Actions, becauſe they damm up the Source and Fountain, and cut off the Occaſions of them.

The Firſt and Principal Source of Evil Actions is our inward Luſt, by which we are always *immediately* tempted; and therefore St. *James* makes mention of no *other* Tempter; but ſays *every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Luſt.* This is that bitter Fountain within us, that naturally ſends forth bitter Waters; But Meditation is like that handful of Salt that *Eliſha* flung into the Fountain of *Jericho*; it will certainly ſweeten it, and make the Streams flow wholſome: entertain but Good thoughts cuſtomarily and with heed, and Evil thoughts will flee before them as darkneſs does at the approach of light.

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The next Source of Evil Actions is the Devil: whoſe wily Temptations tho' they eſcape our ſenſe, yet neither the Teſtimony of Holy Scripture, nor the unaccountable madneſs to which they ſometimes hurry us, will ſuffer us to doubt of, he injects fiery Darts, poyſonous Thoughts, into our Imagination whereby to miſchief us: he ſows tares, the ſeeds of Evil into our Minds: But his ſeed-time (as we are taught in the Parable) is *while men Sleep*, that is, while they Neglect the Cultivation of their Soul, and are *Thoughtleſs*: But let men once enter into ſober thoughts, and take the *ſhield of Faith* in hand (by which expreſſion the Apoſtle means no other than the Contemplation of God's promiſes) and then they have wherewithal *to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil.* He that thinks *ill*, *prevents* the Tempter, and does the Devils buſineſs for him; he that thinks *Nothing*, *Tempts* the tempter, and offers him Poſſeſſion of an Em-

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pty Room: But he that thinks *Religiously*, *Defeats* the Tempter, and is proof and ſecure againſt all his aſſaults.

The Third ſource of Evil Actions is from the influence of outward Objects: both the Good and the Evil things of this life aſſail our Paſſions with equal danger; the Good often *betraying* us, and the Evil *affrighting* us out of our Vertue: But that outward Objects get ſuch victories over us, it proceeds generally not ſo much from their *Strength* as their *Surprize*. The Reaſons of Sin are not ſo ſtrong as to carry us away to the Act with deliberate Conſent; but the Temptations to it are uſually ſo *Suddain* that they hurry away our Paſſions before underſtanding can bethink her ſelf to lay hold of her Reins, and interpoſe her authority. Thus a ſudden injury hurries us to Anger; a ſudden pleaſure hurries us to Intemperance; a ſudden Flattery hurries us to Pride, before we have time to bethink our ſelves of the Folly of Pride,

or

or Intemperance or Anger: For when we come to have ſuch leiſure and ſuch Reflection, it appears that we generally Repent and Condemn our ſelves for having been ſo tranſported. The Caſe therefore with us is thus ---- Our Souls are generally overborn by outward Temptations, as a Ship is blown away by a ſudden Guſt of Wind, while ſhe lies loſe from her Anchor; had her Anchor been caſt, ſhe could have ſtood the wind and continu'd ſafe in the harbour: Now Meditation is like caſting the Anchor; it compoſes the Paſſions, and keeps the ſoul Steady, and ſuffers it not to be driven by any Guſt of Temptation. The Meditation of Sin, Death and Judgment; of Vertue, Redemption and Glory, when entertained ſeaſonably in the mind, will furniſh a preſent anſwer to all the Importunities either of the Good or the Evil things of the World. The ſoul will be able to anſwer to Evil things---Your bitterneſs ſhall not make me

me impatient; for I know I have deſerved you; I had reaſon to expect you; I acknowledge the Juſtice of God in you; nay (more than this) I am taught to profit by you, and to manage you to my eternal Advantage: Why then ſhould I be Impatient? She will be able to anſwer to Good things that tempt her, away ye deceitful ſmiling Evils; you are happily come too late; for I am taken up with other pleaſures, whoſe reliſh and yours is not compatible; away ye flattering Cheats and give me room to enjoy more bleſſed Expectations; *Depart from me ye wicked, I will keep the Commandments of my God.* Such as theſe will be the ready Anſwers of the Soul, when once ſeaſoned and compoſed by Holy Meditation.

And now (in the laſt place) I proceed to ſhew its uſefulneſs in Reſpect of thoſe Actions that are Indifferent.

By indifferent Actions I mean ſuch as either the neceſſity or well-being of

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our Nature engages us in; ſuch as are Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Conference, Buſineſs, Diverſion, &c. Abſtracting from any peccancy they are capable of by reaſon of Exceſs; theſe Actions are all Indifferent. Indeed ſome of the Heathen Philoſophers were of Opinion that no Actions are indifferent, but that all are Poſitively either Good or Evil: Wherein we muſt interpret them to have meant ... not that no Actions are Indifferent in their own Nature, but that no Actions are indifferent in Fact; in Fact (I ſay) in which State Actions, beſide their formal eſſence, do include the End and Intention of the doer: and in this ſenſe they affirmed that a Good man made all his indifferent Actions Good; and on the contrary an ill Man made all his indifferent Actions Evil, by the very manner of doing them. For they laid down this for a Rule of Moral Wiſdom, that every Man ought to fix a προαιρεσιν, (as they call'd it) that

is,

is, a certain General Purpoſe and Scope to all his Actions; this general Purpoſe they required ſhould be συμφώνως τῷ λόγῳ ζῆν, to Act agreeably to Right Reaſon: and hereupon they farther determin'd that ſo long as this Purpoſe was fixt in the mind as a Principle, and while a Man held his Eye upon this, ſo long *all* his Actions, even thoſe that were in themſelves indifferent, were made Wiſe and Good: But on the contrary while this was not fixt, all a Man's Actions, however indifferent in their own Nature, became loſe, Irrational and Evil. This was the Doctrine of the Stoicks, and for the Credit of it we may obſerve that the Doctrine of the H. Scriptures in this point is not much unlike it. St. *Paul* intimates to us from his own Example that every Chriſtian ought to have a general purpoſe, to which all his Actions ſhould be directed, τὴν πρόθεσιν, he calls it, 2 *Tim.* 3. 10. And what this Purpoſe ought to be he tells us,

1 *Cor.* 10. 13. where the Charge runs .... *Whether ye eat or Drink, or whatever ye do, let all be done to the Glory of God:* Now 'tis certain that if we have an eye to the Glory of God in all that we do, this is an Aim that will ſanctifie all our Actions, tho' in themſelves indifferent, as Eating and Drinking and the like: But on the contrary, ſo long as we have not an Eye to this general End, all the Maſs of our Indifferent Actions become an Irrational and Profuſe waſting of that precious Time which God has given us for better uſes, *i. e.* to devote and give it back again to himſelf. Now to fix ſuch a General Purpoſe is the proper buſineſs of Holy Meditation; putting the Queſtion often to our ſoul, *Dic anima, quo tendis & in quod dirigis arcum*: Say my Soul, at what rate liveſt thou? Whither aimeſt thou? Whither tends the Common Level of thy Actions? Haſt thou the Glory of God in Proſpect? Or elſe ſhooteſt thou at Rovers, and only

ly beateſt the Air? This kind of Reflection will Conſecrate the Soul in all ſhe does, and make every Natural Act turn into Religious; and make us meet God every where; and converſe with his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Providence, in our walk, at our buſineſs, at our Table; and render us more Holy to God even at our Work, than, without ſuch Preparation of Thought, we can be at our Prayers.

To conclude --- The Purpoſe of all I have ſaid is to recommend the Duty of Holy Contemplation, and to engage Men to allow Stated ſeaſons to Meditate on Heavenly Things; as being the ſureſt Method to ſecure a Bleſſing upon the Reſt of our Time: I have ſhew'd the particular Uſefulneſs of the Duty; I ſhall refer what may more be ſaid, to the Commenting of your own Private Thoughts upon that Text of the Pſalmiſt, *Whoſo is wiſe will ponder theſe things, and they ſhall underſtand the loving Kindneſs of the Lord.*

The Heavenly Pattern:

A

SERMON

ON

St. MATT. VI. 10.

Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

SUch is the Corruption of our Nature, and ſo is that Corruption improved by ſinful Cuſtom, that there is almoſt a Conſtant ſtanding Oppoſition between God's will and our own: God's will is the Streight Rule, requiring ſuch things as are Honeſt, pure, Holy and of Good Report; Our own will

will is the crooked Rule; requiring ſuch things as pleaſe our ſelves, our ſenſe, our Humour, Luſts: ſo long therefore as Sin and Senſuality have hold of us, this is the Controverſie we lay debating ....Whether we ſhall follow the Crooked Rule or the Streight? Whether we ſhall pleaſe God or Our-ſelves? and our Souls hang Wavering and Diſtracted under this fooliſh unreaſonable Doubt.

It paſſes with us into a *Proverb*, that Let Children have their Wills, and they will undo themſelves, becauſe they want Underſtanding to chooſe what is good for themſelves: But 'tis as true, that let Men have their Wills, and they will undo themſelves much more; Becauſe they that are ſinful are much more fooliſh in their Choices, than they that are Children; and they that want Grace have leſs Underſtanding than they that want Years.

Whither does the iſſue of our own wills lead us but to Intricacies and Mazes,

and Grief and Shame and Repentance, or elſe to Conſequences that are much more unhappy than theſe? Whereas, on the other hand, to do the Will of God is our Wiſdom and our welfare, our ſecurity and our Freedom, our Peace and our Salvation.

And this is the Ground and Reaſon of that Petition in the Text; Wherein we muſt interpret our ſelves to pray unto God that he would reſtrain us by his Grace from doing our own will, till ſuch time as his will becomes Ours; and that he would aſſiſt us to do his Will, and Obey it to all well pleaſing, even as it is done in Heaven.

But it is not my purpoſe to ſpeak more at preſent, Concerning either the Reaſon, or Rule, or Nature of our Obedience; I ſhall rather chooſe to confine my ſelf to the Pattern of it, propoſed in the Text, and that is the Holy Angels; For 'tis they are meant to do the Will of God in Heaven, in ſuch a manner,

ner, as we are obliged to Deſire and Endeavour to do it here on Earth.

Had our Saviour taught us to pray in Poſitive words----*Thy will be done on Earth cheerfully, Conſtantly, Perfectly*; this certainly had been Equivalent to *thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*; For as they do no leſs in Heaven, ſo neither can they do more, than obey God *Cheerfully, Conſtantly, Perfectly*: and yet the Expreſſion our Saviour thought fit to make uſe of, tho' it be but the ſame in the Poſitive ſenſe, is much more Inſtructive by Reaſon of the Compariſon; For by Teaching us to Pray *thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*, he hath ſuggeſted this Inſtruction, (*viz.*) That it is always of Importance and Advantage to us to have a good Pattern in our Eye: And the Reaſon is, becauſe a Pattern does Naturally beget *Emulation*; a Paſſion of mighty influence upon Human Practice.

With the Moraliſts leave, I call Emulation (which in its own Nature is no other than a Propenſion to imitate) — I call it a Paſſion: and it is a very diſferent Paſſion from all that the Moraliſts are wont to Enumerate: For all other Paſſions (they ſay) are Terminated either in *Good or Evil*: Ex: gr. Love, Joy, Hope, are terminated in *Good*; Grief, Hatred, and Fear are Terminated in *Evil*; but Emulation is Terminated in pure Action or *Imitation*, without reſpect whether the matter imitated be either *Good or* Evil. When a Man *loves*, he does not ſo, ſimply for Loves ſake, but for the Objects ſake, becauſe he thinks it fit to be loved: when he *Hates*, he does not ſo for hatreds ſake, but for the Objects ſake, which he thinks fit to be Hated: But when he Emulates, he does it ſimply for Emulations ſake, without regard to the Object, whether it be fit to be imitated or no.

That

That ſuch a kind of Emulation as this is natural to mankind, and that it has a great influence upon Practice, we may learn from Children; whom we may obſerve to be prone with eagerneſs to do any thing which they ſee another do before them; tho' they have neither Thought nor Power to diſcern either the Rectitude or Convenience of what they do: But we may learn it more from them that are of mature Age; who tho' they have Power to diſcern the Rectitude and Convenience of what they do; yet we find that Emulation is able to hurry them on to do things without the Exerciſe of this their Power: For we may obſerve in the world, that many vanities and many Vices are ſupported in daily Practice by the pure force of Emulation: even after all their Intrinſick Temptations are over; when men have no apprehenſion of any either pleaſure or Advantage to ariſe from them; yet this is a ſufficient Reaſon to continue

them in Practice, even *this*----That they may imitate and vye with thoſe others that do the ſame----I eſteem therefore that Emulation is a Paſſion naturally planted in us; and deſigned by Providence (as all other Paſſions are) for excellent Uſes and Ends; tho' the ſucceſs of this as well as of all the Reſt, depends wholly upon Man's Wiſdom in applying them; for as I have intimated already, that Emulation is of mighty force to lead us to ill; ſo (let us but change the Pattern and) it will be of equal force to lead us to Good: And if for the Example of our imitation, we will but entertain the Idea of an Obeying Angel in our mind, it will be Spurrs and Wings to our endeavours to arrive at the Perfection of Angelical Obedience.

My next buſineſs therefore ſhall be to exhibit the Pattern it ſelf. In order to which it will be expedient,

1. To take a View of the Nature of Angels; ſo far forth as to inform us

us, how they are Furniſhed and Inſtructed to do the Will of God.

2. To take a View of their Law; or that Will of God, which he has appointed them to do. And,

3. To ſhew their Manner of Doing this Will and Obeying this Law; to which the Text requires our Obedience ſhould be conformed.

In this Age (ſo fruitful in wild Opinions) many have made it their buſineſs to run down the belief of Angels and Spirits, the more eaſily to introduce the Belief that there is no God; or at leaſt (ſo far as the Sadducees carry'd the Argument) that there is no future State. Others have hug'd the Belief of Angels to a purpoſe almoſt as bad as the former, that is, to ſubvert the Doctrine of the Trinity; aſſerting that the whole Hoſt of Angels (taken Collectively) is that which in Scripture is meant by the Spirit of God, and that there is no other Holy Ghoſt but this --- Others (whō we are

are more acquainted with) have advanc'd the Doctrine of Angels into ſuch a Superſtitious abuſe as to make them the Object of their Adoration: and in Prejudice taken from this abuſe, others (whō we are nearer related to) have run into an indiſcreet Extreme, that is, to Neglect and lay aſide the Knowledge of what the Scripture has deliver'd concerning Angels; altho' of great importance to Chriſtian Edification.

I have made this Reflection, as my *Apology*, for medling with a Subject which many may be prone to cenſure, either as Superſtitious, or Uſeleſs, or Unſeaſonable---And now begin with what I propoſed, (*viz.*) 1. To take a View of the Nature of Angels, ſo far forth as to inform us how they are Furniſhed and Inſtructed to do the Will of God. On which ſubject I ſhall not engage in any Speculation, that is either precarious or ſimply Curious; but I ſhall follow the light of S. S. into ſuch notices of

them

them there deliver'd, as beſt ſerve my preſent Deſign.

Of Angels we may aſſert, 1. That they are the Supreme order of Created Beings; *The chief of the Ways of God*: (For ſo ſome of the Ancients interpret that Expreſſion of *Job*, accounting the whole Paſſage Allegorical) *the Angels are the Chief of the Ways of God*, that is, the moſt excellent of his Works: Their abode is neareſt the Throne of his Preſence; they partake moſt amply of the Image of his Perfections; they are beſt fitted for his Miniſtery, and endowed with ſuch accompliſhments as are moſt proper for the Knowing and Executing his Will. Their Underſtandings are piercing and Comprehenſive; the *Tekoite*'s complement implies ſo much, when ſhe ſays--*My Lord is wiſe according to the Wiſdom of an Angel of God to know all things that are in the Earth.* St. *Peter* alledges it for the magnifying of a Myſtery, *That the Angels could not ſee*

thro'

thro' it; and our Saviour alledges it for magnifying of a Secret *that the Angels were Ignorant of it.*

As for the Subſtance of their Nature the Apoſtle tells us, (*Heb.* 1.) that *they are Spirits*, that is, ſuch beings as are free from the cloud and Impediment of groſs Matter: and hence it is that they are Strong, Agile, Quick, Penetrating; as the *Wind*, as the *Flame* of *Fire*, as the lightning; by which Metaphors therefore they are ſometimes expreſt in Holy Writ. The Prophet *Iſaiah*, to expreſs the weakneſs of the *Egyptian* Army, ſays *their Horſes are Fleſh, and not Spirit*: implying that Spirits among Beings are the moſt Powerful, Vigorous and Strong: and accordingly the Angels are called *Powers* and *Strengths, and ſuch as excell in Strength.* No reſiſtance of material Bodies can hinder their Paſſage or Motion; no darkneſs or Covert can hinder their ſight or Intuition.

The

The Angel ſaw *Sarah* laugh, tho' ſhe conceived it impoſſible, becauſe ſhe was in another Tent: and that other, (*Acts* 12.) could indifferently paſs thro' the Priſon doors to viſit *Peter*, and burſt them open to make room for *him* to paſs. The Firſt-born ſlain in every Houſe throughout the Land of *Egypt*, and above 180000 of *Sennacherib*'s Army ſlain, both in the ſpace of a ſmall part of a Night, and both by the hand of a ſingle Angel, ſufficiently evince both their force and their Expedition.

Tho' they have no Bodies, yet they can Act upon all Bodies: Accordingly they can in an inſtant form and aſſume Bodies unto themſelves; which is Demonſtrated from their frequent appearances in S. S. and from their converſe in Human Shape.

They can reſtrain and ſuſpend the natural Agency of Bodies; as we are told, an Angel withheld the Fire from burning the three *Iſraelites* in the furnace of *Babylon*.

bylon. They can Collect and Manage to their uſes all Meteors and Exhalations: Witneſs thoſe Thunders and Lightnings and Earth-quakes at the Delivery of the Law on Mount *Sinai*; all which we are told was done by the Miniſtry of Angels.

And by this Power of theirs they are qualify'd to be the Inſtruments of God's Pleaſure, in diſpoſing the Temperature of the Air, ordering the influences of the Elements, and adminiſtring the ſeveral iſſues either of publick Bleſſings or Calamities.

In like manner can they Act alſo upon the Bodies of Men, and produce in them different effects either hurtful or Salutary; Whether by diſpoſing our Humours, or affecting our Spirits, or forming Objects in our Imagination: By altering the *Craſis* of our Bodies, that is either by diſturbing or compoſing them, they can influence our State of health. So the Plague that was in-

flicted

flicted upon *Iſrael* for *David*'s numbring the People, is ſaid expreſly to have been from the Operation of an Angel: which Angel of God opened the Eyes of *David* that he might ſee him about his Work; as we are told, (1 *Chron.* 21.) ſo that the Death of thoſe 70000 taken away in that Plague, did not proceed from any tranſient Contagion, Propagated from Man to Man; but from the influence of the Angel, working each Man's blood and humour into a Poyſonous inflammation: And ſo we are expreſly told of *Herod's* Death, (*Act.* 13.) whoſe bowels putrefy'd into worms, that it was the Stroak of an Angel, that is, that it was an Angel that diſpoſed the humours of his Body to ſuch a Putrefaction.

In like manner they can affect us variouſly by working upon our Animal Spirits; by either Fixing or Dilating them, and ſo procuring either Vigour or Dejection, Joy or Sadneſs. Thus

we ſee *Daniel*, (*Chap.* 10.) after the aweful Touch of one Angel had quite enervated him, repreſt his Spirits, and brought him to a *deliquium*; another Touch of the ſame hand Strengthened him again; that is, reſtored his Spirits to their former Motion and Vigour. And this was the Caſe of *Saul* and other *Demoniacks*, that the Evil Angels (let it ſuffice to mention no more of the cauſe at preſent) did at certain times diſturb their Animal Spirits, and run them into deſperate Melancholies: as we find intimated, 1 *Chron.* 16.

Nor have we any countenance from Reaſon or Piety to doubt, but that the Good Angels have always been, and ſtill are, as ready and ſucceſsful in Exhilarating the Spirits of Good men; and ſo ſupporting them in their Religious Labours, and Strengthening them in their ſufferings; and ſometimes even in ſuſpending their ſenſe of Pain, in the midſt of their Tortures; whereof we meet

meet with ſome inſtances in the Hiſtory of the Primitive Martyrs.

And yet farther, the Angels can make a nearer approach to our Souls, and Act upon them by the Mediation of our Fancies; in which they have Power to form ſuch Images and Phantaſies, or (as others love to phraſe it) to excite ſuch Motions, as may become the immediate Object of Thought, and produce Affections ſuitable to the ſeveral appearances.

And by this manner of Operation were all Dreams, Revelations, Viſions of the night, and Prophetical diſcoveries Communicated to Men heretofore. Thus it is ſaid of *Jacob*, of *Balaam*, of St. *Paul*, of *Joſeph* Husband of the Bleſſed Virgin.... That *the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a Dream:* which words we cannot ſo interpret, as if *they dreamed they ſaw an Angel*: For if ſo, whence came the Dream? It were abſurd to ſay, that God immediately gave the

Dream, and made them Dream that an Angel gave it: But the meaning is this ----That they had *ſuch* Dreams, that made ſuch ſtrong impreſſions upon their minds, as convinced them to have been wrought by the Operation of an Angel.

And what I have ſaid of Dreams and Viſions of the Night, is the ſame in reference to ſuggeſtions of the Day, or to Men when awake: For by forming of ſuch ſpecies, or giving ſuch Touches to the Brain, as they (who fully underſtand the Mechaniſm of our ſenſation) know are proper to produce ſuch and ſuch Notices, they are able to Inform or Warn, to Incourage or Dehort our Souls in any manner, as God's Commiſſion or their own Charity ſhall Direct them. And to this Head we muſt refer that complaint of Holy *Job*, (*Chap.* 7. 14.) *Thou ſcareſt me with Dreams and Terrifieſt me with Viſions*: where the *Analogy* of the Hiſtory will not ſuffer us to interpret

interpret, that God himſelf did inject thoſe affrighting Dreams; But that the Evil Angel (unto whoſe Temptations God had ſubmitted the Holy Man, for the Perfecting of his Patience) did frame ſuch terrifying Objects in his Imagination, thereby to urge him to Melancholy and Deſpair. And indeed we need Look no farther than the ſingle inſtance of that one Man, to Demonſtrate all that Power that I have hitherto aſcribed to Angels: For the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* animated to Pillage his Subſtance; the Fire kindled to deſtroy his Houſes; the Wind raiſed to overwhelm his Children; the Blains puſtulated to afflict his Body; his Wife inſtigated to grieve his mind; and his Imagination diſturbed to terrifie his Conſcience, are all the declared effects of Satan's procuring: and if an Evil Angel can do ſo, there is no room for doubting an equal Power in the Good.

Thoſe Powers and Faculties of Angels, already mentioned, will afford a Chriſtian at any time an uſeful Contemplation, to conſider how the Good are qualify'd to protect and aſſiſt us; and it will afford, as well, a very aweful Contemplation, to conſider how the Evil are equally qualify'd to tempt, ſeduce and Captivate all thoſe, who thro' reſiſting God's Grace are ſubmitted to their aſſaults. But each of theſe Contemplations will receive new Matter from what I am to add upon the next Head, and that is to take a View of the *Law* of Angels, or of that Will of God which he has appointed them to obey.

And this General Law of Angels I ſhall reduce to theſe 4 Particulars, (*viz.*)

The Firſt Law of Angels is to ſerve God's Glory.

The 2d is to ſerve his Providence.

The 3d is to ſerve his Church: and,

The 4th is to ſerve the particular members of his Church.

The

The Firſt is to ſerve God's Glory: Which certainly is the Firſt and Supreme Law of Angels, as it is indeed of all other Creatures: as *Solomon*, intimates, *Prov.* 16. 4. when he ſays, that *God made all things for himſelf*, that is, for his own Service and Glory. Or if we ſhould ſay that the firſt Motive of God's making any Creature was his benignity and Pleaſure to Communicate of his Goodneſs to that Creature; the Reſult is the ſame; for thence it becomes the Supreme and Univerſal obligation of every Creature to return unto God the Glory of that his Goodneſs. How the Angels diſcharge this obligation we have an account given us in an expreſs form of their Heavenly Service, recorded, *Revel.* 7. 11, 12. where 'tis ſaid---- *And all the Angels ſtood about the Throne, and fell before the Throne on their Faces, and Worſhipped God, ſaying, Amen: Bleſſing and Glory and Wiſdom and Thankſgiving and Honour and Power and Might be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.* This

is the Angels imployment about the Throne of God's preſence: nor is it ſimply their Imployment, but it is their happineſs too: For as the Wind that fanns the Flowers returns from them with the Tincture of their ſweetneſs; ſo all the breath that the Heavenly Hoſt ſpends in the praiſe of God returns to themſelves accumulated with Joy and Bleſſing: God having appointed (as his Holineſs requires) that there ſhall be an inſeparable Connexion betwixt Duty and Beatitude; betwixt a Zeal for his Glory and the Participation of his Glory.

The 2d Law of Angels is to ſerve God's Providence; *i. e.* By working and procuring the ſeveral iſſues of it in the World. For it is a Doctrine received as well by *Jews* heretofore, as now by Chriſtians, that God does work all outward Events whether of Judgment or Mercy, not Immediately by Himſelf, but by the Delegation and Miniſtery

ſtery of Angels. And ſo that Text, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. where it is ſaid that..... *The Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is Perfect towards him*, the *Jews* interpreted of the Angels, as we may learn from *Philo*, who ſays, that the Eyes of God are his Angels. And indeed the Interpretation is confirmed, *Rev.* 5. 6. where the Spirits that are ſaid *to be ſent forth from God into the whole Earth*, are called by the *Name of Eyes*. By theſe Eyes therefore (as the former Text tells us) God *ſhews himſelf Strong*; that is, he does not only ſee and viſit the State of Men, but likewiſe executes his will and the Iſſues of his Providence upon them by his Angels:.....And of this kind the Scripture abounds in numberleſs inſtances.

The Third Law of Angels is to ſerve God's Church, their moſt Peculiar and Principal Charge. Therefore the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 1. *ult.* gives us a Definition

tion of Angels that only bears reſpect to this their Office, (*viz.*) they are *Miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to miniſter for thoſe who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation.*

And as we are told particularly concerning *Michael* the Arch-angel, (*Dan.* 10.) that he was the Prince or Tutelar Angel of the Jewiſh Church and People; ſo from, *Rev.* 12. *&c.* we have reaſon to inferr that *He* and the Heavenly hoſt under his Command, are Related in the ſame Capacity to the Chriſtian Church, to watch over it, and Adminiſter its affairs, and to guard it from the Violence of its avowed Enemy the Devil. That every particular Church of Chriſt has the Preſidence and Guardianſhip of an Angel, we may (when we pleaſe to be Curious) Collect from the beginning of St. *John's* Revelation: Where the ſeveral meſſages and Monitions ſent from Chriſt our Lord, are Directed to the *Angels* of the ſeveral Churches. For altho' by Angels there are moſt probably meant no other

other than the Biſhops of thoſe reſpective Churches; yet the very Reaſon of the Metaphor implies *thus much* that there were Angels appointed by God to preſide over Churches, as well as Biſhops; and this is it that grounds the *Analogy* betwixt Biſhops and Angels. And that Text of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11: 18. where the Apoſtle urges the neceſſity of a decent Behaviour in the Church *becauſe of the Angels*, appears to ſet it out of Controverſie that all Chriſtian Aſſemblies are attended with their preſence and inſpection. To what Ends, and to what purpoſes of Piety I ſhall ſpeak more under the next Head.

The 4th Law of Angels; which is to ſerve the particular Members of the Church.

It were too Nice to ſay that every diſtinct Man has his diſtinct Guardian Angel: it may be true ſometimes that many have but One; and it may be true at other times that one has many; as

as we find *Jacob* had at *Mahanaim* and *Elias* at *Dothan.* But this we may ſafely affirm, that no Chriſtian is without an Angel to inſpect his Behaviour, and to Solicit his well-doing. To this the Pſalmiſt gives expreſs Teſtimony when he ſays---*The Angel of the Lord ſtandeth round about thoſe that fear him* : and that Paſſage which the Devil applies to our Saviour, *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy Ways,* is deliver'd by the Pſalmiſt as true of every Servant of Chriſt as well as of Chriſt himſelf. And this Doctrine receives undeniable confirmation from our Saviours own mouth, *Mat.* 18. 10. where he gives us an illuſtrious proof of the great regard that God has to all mankind by aſſuring us, that *thoſe very Angels that always behold the face of God,* that is enjoy the *Beatifick* Viſion, and in conſequence are as happy as it is poſſible for Creatures to be, do yet (as by order they are appointed) take care of thoſe that we look upon as the moſt incon-

inconſiderable part of Mankind, that is, *little Children.*

But to impreſs the Concern of this Doctrine a little cloſer upon our minds, I ſhall ſhew in a Word more, what are the particular Ends of this Miniſtery of Angels: and theſe I ſhall comprize under theſe Three Offices, (*viz.*) *to Guard, to Guide,* and *to be Witneſſes of our Converſation.*

The Firſt End of the Miniſtery of Angels, is *to Guard*: Where by Guarding I mean largely both Offices, either of Aſſiſting to Good, or Protecting from Evil: *Juvandi* or *Averruncandi*, as the Gentiles ſtiled them, and attributed them to their Demons; Borrowing their Notion undoubtedly either from Holy Writ, or from the *Jews* with whom they had Converſation: thus ſays Tobit of his Son travelling into *Media, the Good Angel will keep him Company, and his Journey ſhall be Proſperous*: Which is but the ſame that *Abraham* ſays of his Servant

Servant travelling to *Nahor*, *the Lord will ſend his Angel with thee, and proſper thy Way.* And as we may obſerve that Each of theſe mentioned Travellers, were attended with remarkable Circumſtances of Felicity in their Journey; ſo we muſt conclude (unleſs we will charge the Patriarch himſelf with Ignorance and Superſtition) that thoſe Circumſtances were mediately brought about by the aſſiſtance of Angels. In reference to the Office of Protecting, *Jacob*, (*Gen.* 48. 16.) tells us of the *Angel that Redeemed him from all Evil*; and wiſhes the ſame Protection from him to his Children. Now this Protection of *Jacob* from Evil by his Angel we may apply to ſeveral Paſſages of his Life: Particularly, when he returned from *Meſopotamia*, thro' his Brother *Eſau*'s Territory, for while he lay under a terrible apprehenſion of his Brothers diſpleaſure, it is ſaid, *the Angels met him*, (Gen. 32. 1.) *They met him*, that is, they ſhew'd themſelves

themſelves to him to aſſure him of their Cuſtody; and by and by we ſee what followed: his Brother *Eſau* contrary to his Natural roughneſs, and his avowed Revenge, comes and treats him in a moſt friendly manner: which ſudden change of *Eſau* we may reaſonably judge to have been the product of one of thoſe Angels that appeared; who by working upon his Humours and Fancy ſweetened him into that particular Benignity of Temper.

But doubtleſs the moſt important part of the Cuſtody of Angels is to Guard men from the inſults of Satan and Evil Spirits: For when we conſider both the Malice and Power of thoſe Evil Spirits, we muſt conclude that our ſafety from perpetual miſchiefs can depend upon nothing, but their Reſtraint: which Reſtraint tho' it iſſue primarily from the Good Will of God, yet we have reaſon to believe it executed by the Vigilance and Protection of

Angels.

Angels. And this is the meaning of that *War in Heaven*, (i. e. in the Church) waged *betwixt* Michael *and the* Dragon, (*Rev.* 12.) the one always contending to deſtroy men, and the other to ſave them.

The 2d End of the Miniſtery of Angels is to Guide. By guiding I mean whatſoever is oppoſite to Seducing and Tempting, the Office of the Devil. For as he goeth about ſeeking to ſeduce us *from Good*; ſo the holy Angels on the contrary Solicit and Guide us *to Good*; and by all thoſe Methods of their Acting upon us (which I have already mention'd) eſpecially by working upon our Fancies, and thereby ſuggeſting good Thoughts, warming Holy Purpoſes, and Refreſhing men in pious undertakings; they aſſiſt and Promote the Work of our Sanctification.

But becauſe it were impious to Eclipſe or any way Derogate from the gracious Undertaking of the Divine Spirit

rit the Holy Ghoſt, the ſole Original Author of our Sanctification; it is fit to obſerve that this Doctrine of the Guidance of Angels is clear from any ſuch Guilt: For it admits that all the Means and Methods of our Sanctification do Originally flow from the Holy Ghoſt; and that even when Angels aſſiſt, the Grace is *His*; and therefore *His* the Glory; becauſe they act only by his Delegation.

But farther (which we ought chiefly to obſerve) this Doctrine does not aſſert that the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, and the aſſiſtance of Angels is *alike*, or ſo much as of the ſame kind. For there is a mighty diſparity between the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Operation of Angels upon our Soul. And I find St. *Bernard thus* diſtinguiſhing upon the Matter---- *Angelus* (ſays he) *Adeſt animæ, non Ineſt; Suggerit bona, non Ingerit; Hortatur ad bonum, non bonum creat:* Which in effect is this---- The

Angel comes *to* the Soul; the Holy Ghoſt comes *into* the Soul; the Angel ſuggeſts and *Recommends* Good to us; but the Holy Ghoſt does by a powerful Energy *Create* and *Plant* it *in* us. In a word----The Angels cannot Act upon our Soul but Mechanically, and by the Mediation of our Body; But the Holy Ghoſt acts Directly upon it, *i. e.* Immediately, and upon its very Eſſence.

It ſeems therefore moſt worthy the Majeſty of God, and moſt ſuitable to our own Diſtance to Believe that whatſoever of God's pleaſure can be done for our ſouls Mechanically, the Angels are the Inſtruments of doing it. Say what elſe could be the Reaſon, why our Saviour Chriſt himſelf (as we are Remarkably told) was Refreſhed when Hungry, and Strengthened when Agonizing, by Angels; altho' at the ſame time he had the Holy Ghoſt dwelling *Bodily*, *i. e.* Eſſentially in him. But on the other ſide, to work Immediately upon

upon the Soul, and to Change, and Sanctifie it Effectually, this (I ſay) is only the Work of God that made it.

3. The Third End of the Miniſtery of Angels is to be *Witneſſes of our Converſation*, and upon occaſion to Evidence and make Report of the Actions of Men.

This is an Office of Angels, not ſo expreſly delivered in Scripture; but it is ſo ſtrongly imply'd there as makes it equivalent to an Expreſs. For we know Angels are refer'd to as Inſpectors of Human Actions, *Eccl.* 5. 6. 1 *Cor.* 11. 10, *&c.* And why do they inſpect, if not to Teſtifie? We know St. *Paul* obteſts and charges Timothy *before the Angels*, 1 Tim. 5. 2. And why before the Angels, if they were not to be Witneſſes of the Manner of his Diſcharge? And when our Saviour ſays, *There is Joy in Heaven over a Sinner that Repenteth*; How can this be, unleſs the Repentance be ſome way Teſtify'd and Reported in

Heaven? And ſurely whatever Notice *they above* can have of our affairs, this way of Communicating by the Entercourſe of Angels deſerves more credit than that Streined Invention of the *Speculum Trinitatis.*

There is likewiſe another matter to which this Office may juſtly be extended.....We know that Satan is ſtiled *the Accuſer of the Brethren*; which Stile implies.....That as he now Tempts men; ſo he will afterwards (whether at Death or Judgment) charge and Exaggerate, and Clamour for Juſtice upon thoſe whom he has Tempted: Now to Balance this Malice of Satan (who nevertheleſs ſhall not want a Hearing) it is Reaſonable to believe that the Holy Angels ſhall appear as Compurgators of the Accuſed, and produce their Knowledge to vindicate God's mercy towards them, and to Stop the mouth of the Calumniator.--Nor will this ſeem a Precarious Conjecture to any who ſhall

conſider that the Holy Scripture tells us the ſame thing in a Matter of Fact: For, *Malac.* 3. we have the Repreſentation of a Particular Judgment; *Joſhua* the High-Prieſt is brought in, and inſulted over by Satan, as a vile and unpardonable Sinner; But in the mean time a Good Angel appears, ſuſtains the High-Prieſt, alledges that what he had done was accepted to the Remiſſion of his Sins; and thereupon ſilences the Devil with the Menace of God's rebuke.

I ſhall cloſe this Office of Angels with the Judgment of Venerable *Origen*; who in his Commentary upon *Job, Chap.* 1. 6. ſpeaking of the Angels offering up the Prayers of the Saints unto God, he ſays----*Offerunt Sancti Angeli Deo*---- *non quaſi neſciat is qui omnia novit, antequam fiant; ſed ut Teſtes efficiantur Sanctitatis atq; pietatis juſtorum,* i. e. *They do theſe Offices, not to carry the Knowledge of theſe things to God, who knows all before, even before they are done; but it is to Act*

and Diſcharge themſelves as Witneſſes of the Piety of Good Men.

And now what I have ſaid concerning the Nature and Offices of Angels may ſerve, 1. To recommend that part of Devotion, wherein pious Chriſtians in all ages have been wont to implore of God their Succour and Protection. For when we conſider of what importance it is to have the Succour and Defence of Holy Angels, it muſt appear to be either great Ignorance of the matters of our Religion, or great Neglect of our own welfare that ſhall hinder us to pray for ſo important a Bleſſing.

It may ſerve, 2. To mind us of the wonderful vouchſafements of God unto mankind, while we conſider that our preſent ſtate, how Contemptible ſoever it may appear to be in other reſpects, yet it is honour'd with the attendance and Service of ſuch Excellent Creatures: So that whoſoever ſhall take care to live

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in the fear of God, tho' his outward fortunes be not above those of *Lazarus*, he shall have his Angels, to wait on the Advantages of his Soul while *in* the Body; as well as to translate it out of the Body to a blessed Eternity.

It may serve, 3. To dispose our minds to a proper Reverence of the Holy Angels; that is, to think on them as those who are constant Witnesses of our Behaviour, and to bear an awful regard to their Presence and Inspection; and to take care, that they who wait on us for our Good, be not frighted or grieved from their Station by our unworthy Deportment.

But then ..... All I have said does not serve in the least to Countenance the *Worshipping* of Angels: the Worshipping of Angels being a Practice so contrary both to the Precepts and Warnings and Instances of H. Writ, that nothing less than a strong delusion could ever give it birth in the Christian Church.

When St. *John* had the preſence of an Angel made viſible to him, *Rev.* 22. 9. and that Angel was imploy'd to conduct him to the Knowledge of many raviſhing Myſteries; 'tis true indeed that the Apoſtle (as one overcome with the tranſport of what he ſaw and heard, and ſo reduc'd to a ſudden lapſe of mind) made *Offer* to give the Angel Worſhip; but we ſee how the Angel rebukes the offer, by crying haſtily.... *See thou do it not; I am thy Fellow-Servant; Worſhip God.* Which is a Paſſage ſufficient to make us admire the groſs Infatuation which that pretended infallible Church fell under, when ſhe eſtabliſht the Worſhip of Angels; after that God had not only forbidden it; but likewiſe the Angels themſelves had declared their expreſs abhorrence of ſuch a Worſhip.

Worſhip God; and we may be ſecure of the good Offices of his Angels: but Worſhip Angels, and we may be ſure

to displeaſe both them and him that ſends them.

And now I come to the laſt thing I propoſed, that is, to ſhew the Manner ----How the Holy Angels *do the Will of God*; in which particular the Text propoſes them for our Pattern. 3

And we are ſure, they do it *Perfectly*: all the Repreſentations we have of them *in Scripture*, ſerve to Typifie the Perfection of their Obedience. They are Repreſented to us as *Standing* about the Heavenly Throne; a Poſture that ſignifies their Readineſs and Preparation for their Imployment: they are Repreſented as *Full of Eyes*; a Circumſtance that ſignifies their Ambition to know every Inſtance of the Divine will: they are Repreſented as furniſhed with many wings; a Symbol that ſignifies their Speed and Cheerfulneſs in executing their Charge: and finally their Aſſiduity and Perſeverance in this courſe is Repreſented to us, when we are told *that they ceaſe*

ceaſe not day nor night, they are *ever* Praiſing, *ever* ſerving; to do the Will of God is their *Meat and Drink*, their great Refreſhment, their Eternal Feaſt. Thus the Will of God is done in Heaven----But alas! How ſhall it be done ſo on Earth? Or to what poſſible meaſures of Conformity can weak and fooliſh Man ever work his Obedience? Why this is the matter that requires our Induſtry; this is our *Work*; and it is not an Impracticable one: we do not pray *Vainly, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*; and if it be not our own fault, we ſhall not pray ſo in vain.

Is it hard to convince our ſelves, that the Will of God is our beſt Intereſt? Or that the doing of it is our greateſt Good? Or is it hard for our Beſt intereſt to engage our Obedience? Or for our Greateſt Good to Command our Affections? Now to obey God with Affection is all our Work; and when we do *this*, we do his will even as it is done in Heaven.

For as in the caſting into the Treaſury,

ſury, (*Luk.* 21.) when the Rich *caſt in of their abundance* and the Widow *but her Mite*, tho' the *Gifts* were different, yet the Charity was the ſame: ſo tho' the Performances of Men and Angels cannot but differ in Meaſures; yet if they proceed from the ſame Principle, the Obedience is the *ſame*; the ſame in kind, the ſame in Acceptance. And therefore tho' we cannot do the Will of God ſo *Worthily*, *Accurately*, *Indeſinently*; yet we may do it with a *free heart* and *with all our Power*; and *ſo*, we may do it as do the Angels.

But ſtill the difficulty is behind: Remove the Impediments, and the way is Eaſy; But *How* ſhall theſe be Removed? How ſhall Man be able to walk Affectionately with God, whoſe Soul has naturally another Byaſs? How ſhall *he* be able to Act always of the *ſame ſide*, who Naturally is not the *ſame Man*? He that has *a Heart and a Heart*, *a Luſt and a Luſt*, *a Law and a Law*, and theſe contrary

contrary the one to the Other: How shall such a one be able to Act freely, and Readily, and Undistractedly as the Angels do?

Why even in this, our Pattern may instruct us: For the Angels tho they were made such excellent Creatures, yet we may observe that the bare Excellency of their Nature did not carry them to that Pitch of Obedience, which they now Perform unto God: For we find from the instance of those which fell, that they were made obnoxious to Passions and Temptations and Falling, as well as we: and the Reason they now stand so firm to their Obedience, is that which our Saviour has mention'd, *Mat.* 18. 10. (*viz.*) Because *they continually behold the Face of God:* They love continually to Look unto God, and in him they see so much Amiableness, as gives an Eternal Poize to their Affections; whereby they are Bent and Fixt inseparably to the Love of

of God. If then we will be *like to the Angels* (as our Saviour tells us, all Good Men ſometime ſhall be) we muſt begin our Imitation of them at this Point: Faith muſt be to us inſtead of Viſion, Contemplation inſtead of ſeeing: We muſt Contemplate God frequently, diligently; we muſt *always behold* that Gracious Repreſentation he has made of himſelf in the *Scripture*; and there we ſhall diſcover ſuch Riches of his Goodneſs and Benignity, as cannot but excite our Love towards him. And if the *Love* of God once take root in our Hearts, it will exhauſt all our looſe Affections, and will ſuſpend all our ſinful deſires; it will make the Divine Will paſs into our *Own*; and then we ſhall do it *as we do our Own*, without Reluctancy, without Sloth, without wearineſs. ...So it is they do it in Heaven; and ſo may we do it on Earth! By the aſſiſtance of that Grace, which God will give thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

To whom, &c. *The*

The Preparation of the Heart to wait upon God.

A

SERMON

ON

PSAL. II. 11.

Rejoyce unto him with Trembling.

SAint *John* relating his Vision of Heaven, (*Rev.* 4.) tells us of some Angels he saw attending about the Throne of God, that *they were full of Wings and of Eyes*: a Good-man (in the humble distance of his Station) is not unlike One of those Angels: His affections are the *Wings* of his Soul; and

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a Sanctify'd Understanding is his *Eyes* to guide those Wings: His Love, Hope and Joy, mount him up to God, and keep him attending on Holy Contemplations; and his Hatred, Grief and Fear, keep him in a due Aversion and Distance from Evil:——

But on the other side, while we lie under the Dominion of Sin, we are like Creatures that have Wings, but *no* Eyes; Our affections are always flying; but without Wisdom or Discernment: they often fly *to* those things that are most hurtful; and they as often fly *from* those things that are most friendly to us: they weary and wast us with vain hurryings, and often dash us in pieces by the meer Precipitancy of their Flight.—— Would we then get Eyes to our Wings, we must hearken to the Advice of the Holy Scripture, which calls all our Affections unto God; as my Text in particular does Two of them, (*viz.*) our Joy and our Fear, in the present Words——

Rejoyce

Rejoyce unto him with Trembling, or with Fear. Our Joy is moſt Commonly imploy'd in waiting upon our vanities; Our fear is moſt Commonly imploy'd in waiting upon our Phantaſms and Apprehenſions; and *there* both of them do us miſchief: But let us bring them both together to wait upon God in the Offices of Religion, and there they will do our Souls their proper Service.

I do not purpoſe (at this time) to ſpeak of the Difference betwixt a Good and an Evil Joy; or between a Carnal and a Heavenly fear; that I will leave to Common Diſcretion to premiſe) I only purpoſe to ſpeak of the uſes of theſe two Affections in the Service of God and Religion; according to the direct Scope and intent of the Text; which I ſhall give you in the vulgar Interlineary Gloſs upon it; which runs thus ---- *Ne Servitium miſeria videatur, dicitur---Exultate; ſed ne in Temeritatem cadat, ſubditur---- Cum Tremore*; (i. e.) leaſt any ſhould look

look upon the Service of God as a Burden, the Pſalmiſt bids us perform it with Joy; and on the other hand, leſt our Joy ſhould prove to be Raſh, he bids us Temper it with Fear.

Joy therefore and Fear are two Qualifications which the Text recommends to us, as equally neceſſary to diſpoſe our minds to the Offices of Religion. *And* my buſineſs ſhall be to ſpeak of them ſeverally, with Regard to the ſeveral influences they bear towards the due diſcharge of thoſe Performances: and 1. Of joy, in our Addreſſes to God:----

Joy towards God (or as the Text expreſſes it) *Rejoycing unto Him*, ſignifies no other than the taking of a Rational pleaſure in the Acts of his Worſhip and the Offices of his Service:

And the needfulneſs and uſe of ſuch a Joy will appear from theſe following Conſiderations.

1. Becauſe that without ſuch a Joy we can never make it appear that we

are *ſenſible of*, or thankful *for* God's Goodneſs towards us.

2. When the Law was delivered upon Mount *Sinai*, by which Law all Preſumptuous Sins were Puniſhed with Death, Death without Mercy, becauſe no Atonement was allowed for them (as we ſee, *Num.* 15. 30.) this Law was Uſher'd in with Thunderings, and Earthquakes, and Fire, and Smoak, and all the Motives of Human Terrour: ſignifying Emblematically, that if God ſhould pleaſe to proceed with Man according to the Rules of Rigorous Juſtice; there would be no reaſonable place left for Joy among mankind, but every Soul muſt pine away with terrour and the Apprehenſions of Wrath to come. But when our Saviour came to deliver the Law of Grace, his coming was uſher'd in with quite contrary Circumſtances: with the *Muſick* of Angels, and with a ſoft voice proclaiming----*Behold, I bring you glad Tidings of great Joy*: Joy, that there is a general

general Atonement allow'd for all manner of Sin; Joy----That God is propitiated and made favourable to mankind by the undertaking of a Mediator; that there are Over-tures of Mercy, boundless Compassion, Bowels yearning to *seek* those that are lost, and open to *Receive* those that return; Joy ---That Men may be deliver'd from the bondage of Fear into the Liberty and Love of Sons; into Access and Acceptance with God, and the precious Hope of a Blessed Immortality. ----All this matter of Joy hath God published to the World, and that for *this very* End, that he might thereby prepare to himself a *Willing* people, with *Free* hearts, and *Cheerful* Services, and *Joyful* Obedience.

From which Consideration it must follow, that all *Slackness* and *Lukewarmness* of Affections; all *Servile* and *Involuntary* Performances of Duty towards God, must needs be unworthy his acceptance; as being so far short of, and unsuitable

to the Encouragements that he has given us.

2. A ſecond Argument I alledge for Joy or Cheerfulneſs in the Service of God, is this----Becauſe that without ſuch a Religious Joy, a Man ſhall always lie open and unguarded to the aſſaults of ſenſual Joy.

For Joy is almoſt the ſame to the Soul, as Breathing is to the Body; it is neceſſary to Life; and the Want of it is pure ſuffocation. As therefore, when a Man goes out of a Good air, he muſt yet neceſſarily *breath*, tho he be ſure to breath infection; So the Soul, if it ſeeks not its Joy in Good, it muſt neceſſarily take up with That that offers it ſelf in Evil; though in the end it prove miſchievous and undoing. He therefore that is ſo happy and ſo wiſe, as to inure himſelf to the Contemplation of Heaven and the Love of God, till ſuch time as his Soul takes pleaſure in being Religious; till ſuch time as he *Taſts and ſees how*

how Good the Lord is; till ſuch time as he feels the Practice of his Duty bring a Cuſtomary and Habitual refreſhment to the Soul; ſuch a Man has always ſomething to anſwer to the Temptations of Worldly Joy, when they aſſault him: *i. e.* He has no need of them; his Soul is already at eaſe; ſo that he has leiſure to examine the Nature and Conſequences of all other Joys, before he entertains them: whereas he that finds no Joy in Religion, can never reſtrain his ſoul from ſeeking it elſewhere: and hence it comes to paſs, that Men uſually cloſe with every appearance of Worldly pleaſure, though at the expence of their *Virtue*, and hazard of eternal Life; only becauſe they will not be ſo happily curious as to try and inform themſelves, what Reſt, Satisfaction and Comfort, there is to be found in being truly Religious.

3. Without this Religious Joy, a Man has no inward Principle that can morally diſpoſe him to the ſeveral Offices of his Duty.

There is a Face of Religion in the World, but this is the general complaint, that it is but a *Face*; it wants the Life: and the Reason is, because Mens Religion does generally grow from Principles that are Weak and not able to support it. For,

1. Custom, and Fashion, and Compliance with human Laws, and Regard to Credit, and Respect to worldly Advantages, are Common Principles that set Men a work in the outward Offices of Religion; but these Principles, as they are not intrinsecally Religious in themselves, so neither can they produce or support Religion, but only in Form and Shew.

But, 2. There are other Principles which are intrinsecally Religious, as the Fear of God's Justice, and sorrow for Sin; and these may set Men a work upon their Duty: But yet these Principles, though they are Good, they are Defective, and not sufficient for the Work;

Work; they are proper to begin a Good Life, but not competent to carry it on thro' all its Offices: they are purging, but they are likewiſe weakening: Fear and ſorrow, have each of them Torment in them; and do oppreſs the Soul in ſuch a meaſure, that if it be not relieved by ſome more Cordial Affections, it will not long be able to endure their Yoak. Fear therefore tho' it be always Good, becauſe it reſtrains from Evil; yet it never rightly advances in Religion till it becomes Filial, that is, mixt and ſweetened with Love: and Sorrow, tho' it cleanſes, yet it does not ſanctifie as is requiſite, till ſuch time as looking thro' the Cloud of God's Anger, and apprehending his Goodneſs, it twines it ſelf and leſſens into Joy. When Joy is once introduced into the Soul; when a Man is once come to take Delight in the Service of God, he has then got a laſting and vigorous Principle, that will carry him thro' all the Offices of his Duty;

that will diſpoſe him to Bleſſing and Praiſe and Thankſgiving; which are the moſt High and Excellent Acts of Religious Worſhip; and yet the Soul is never rightly diſpos'd to perform them, till ſuch time as it is raiſed to ſome degrees of ſpiritual Joy.

4. Without this Religious Joy, a Man has no proper Indication that the Spiritual Life is formed in him. For we may obſerve, that wherever there is a Life, there are peculiar Actions that naturally flow from that vital Power, and in thoſe Actions does conſiſt the proper pleaſure of that Life. *Ex. gr.* The ſenſitive Life exerts it ſelf in Taſting, Smelling, Hearing, and the other Acts of Senſation; and in the exerciſe of theſe Acts does properly conſiſt the pleaſure of the ſenſitive Life: ſo the Rational Life exerts it ſelf in the Acts of Invention, Arguing and Diſcourſe, and in theſe Acts does conſiſt the proper pleaſure of the Rational Life: and in like manner all

all the Notion we can have of the Spiritual Life muſt be this, that it is a vital Power derived from the Spirit of God, whoſe peculiar Acts reſpect the Offices of Religion, and therefore its proper pleaſure lies in the Exerciſe of thoſe Acts. So that where the Acts of Religion are performed without any Pleaſure, Joy or Complacency taken in them; we may infer, that they are only forced Acts from a falſe Principle; That, that vital Principle of the New Creature, that Form of Regeneration whereby a Believer is different from the reſt of the World, is not yet introduced into the Soul. I do not ſay, but that this Principle of the New Life, may ſometimes be obſtructed for a ſeaſon in the Complacency of its Acts, even when it is in the Soul: the ſpiritual Power may have its drowſineſſes, its Sleep, and its Torpors, as well as the Senſitive and Rational Powers have theirs ſometimes; Becauſe this Power may be affected with the Infirmities of

of the Body, as well as they: But this I ſay, that for a Man to be *long* Hungerleſs towards the Acts of Religion; and *long* joyleſs in the Performance of them, is a ſign that the Power is not barely obſtructed, but wholly abſent; it is a ſign that the Soul is Unſanctify'd, and Dead in Sin.

Let us but conſider the Nature of Joy, and we ſhall find it to be a Reflection upon the doing of our ſelves ſome apparent Good; now to be Religious is certainly the doing of our ſelves the Greateſt good: whence it muſt follow that for a Man to Act Religiouſly, and not to take Joy in it, is Monſtrous and Unnatural. Whenſoever therefore a Man does ſerve God ſincerely, he cannot chooſe but *Rejoyce unto God*; that is, he cannot chooſe but conceive a Rational Joy in the Service, as reflecting that it will certainly do him Good: but on the contrary, he that does not *Rejoyce unto God*, proclaims himſelf conſcious

ſcious of not ſerving God; at leaſt of not ſerving God in ſuch a manner, as is like to turn to his Good.

Thus much I have ſaid to recommend the firſt neceſſary Qualification to make our Addreſſes acceptable to God, that is Joy: I proceed to the Second, which is Fear.

It is obſerv'd in Naturals, that Men of a Complexional fear, that is, they who have the Paſſion of Fear too much abounding in their Temper, are not *Fit* for Action; becauſe their Spirits are always clog'd with Coldneſs and Miſgiving, and Irreſolution: and likewiſe, on the contrary, Men of a Complexional Joy, that is, they whoſe Spirits are always Simmering and Leaping into gayety, are not *Wiſe* in Action; Becauſe they are apt to act Raſhly and Diſorderly: and therefore the truly Wiſe and Uſeful Complexion is that, where theſe Two Paſſions are properly Mixt; where there is a due Proportion of

of Joy, to ſet us a work; and a due Proportion of Fear, to bound us within the Limits of Diſcretion.

And the ſame Obſervation holds true in reference to Religion: where Fear without Joy, muſt neceſſarily hinder us from ſerving ſo willingly as our Duty requires; and Joy without fear, muſt neceſſarily hinder us from ſerving ſo *wiſely* as our *ſafety* requires: and this is the Reaſon, why my Text injoyns us to Mix theſe Affections, and *Rejoyce unto God with Trembling*.

I intend not (upon this head) to ſpeak of the General uſe of Fear in Religion; but only of its peculiar uſe in conducting and Tempering our Joy, when we Act in reſpect to God: and this I ſhall ſhew, according to my former Method, in theſe following Conſiderations.

1. Becauſe Religion offers no matter to our Joy, but that, in the ſame proſpect, it offers an equal Concern to our Fear. (*Ex. gr.*) it is a proper matter of

Joy

Joy, for me to reflect that I am a Chriſtian; that I live among the outward Ordinances and Means of Salvation; that I am a Member of a Covenant eſtabliſht upon glorious Privileges, excellent Benefits, Precious Promiſes: But it is equally a proper matter of Fear, to reflect, that he is not a Chriſtian, who is *One outwardly*; that *in Chriſt Jeſus nothing availeth but a new Creature*; that the Privileges of Chriſtianity are annexed to the Duty; the Benefits, to the Life; and the Promiſes, to the Conditions: ſo that the Name of a Chriſtian, is but like the Waters of Jealouſy; which, as they gave Reputation to the Innocent, ſo they rotted the Guilty: and in like manner, the living in the outward Profeſſion of Religion, does bring moſt happy Advantages to thoſe that walk in ſincerity; But to thoſe that retain that Profeſſion in unrighteouſneſs, it will ſerve no more than an Aggravation both of Guilt and Puniſhment.

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It is a proper matter of Joy, to Contemplate the Merits of Chriſt, and what a Competent Satisfaction his Obedience has wrought out for the Sins of the whole World: But it is equally matter of Fear, to Contemplate, that all the Obedience of Chriſt is deſigned for Example, as well as Merit: and therefore it is obſervable, that there is no Act of Chriſt's Obedience, upon which are reaſonably grounded our Joy; ſuch as are his Birth, Life, Death and Reſurrection; but there is ſome Duty required of us, which the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture is pleaſed to call by the very ſame Name: thus there is a Chriſtian Birth, Life, Death, and Reſurrection, all different from the Natural, which we are required to paſs thro': and the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in calling the ſeveral parts of our Duty by the ſame Names that he calls thoſe of Chriſt's Satisfaction, ſeems to be this, (*viz.*) That the very Names ſhould always ſerve to put us in Remembrance, that

that we ſtand indiſpenſably obliged to a ſtudious Imitation of Chriſt; and unleſs his Example reach us, his Merit never will.

It is a proper matter of Joy, to Contemplate the happy State of the World to come; the Franchiſes of the New *Jeruſalem*; the Fellowſhip of Saints and Angels; the Viſion and Enjoyment of God, where there is no Pain, no Want, no Allays, where there are pleaſures forevermore: But it is equally matter of fear, to conſider that the New *Jeruſalem* is called the Holy City, where *nothing unclean* can enter; and therefore it is impoſſible for our ſelves to enter there, unleſs we are firſt Capacitated, by laying aſide, and ſtripping our ſelves of the Habit, and Power, and Deſire, of every known Sin.

Once more----It is a proper matter of Joy, and the application of all the reſt, to be able to Contemplate a good State of Things *within* us; to ſee that we

we live under reſtraint, and perform Holy Offices to God, and good Works to Men: But then in this proſpect it is equally matter of Fear, to conſider what careleſs Intervals, what Carnal Ends, what ſinful mixtures, what over-valuing pride, may ſully all our Performances, and render them unacceptable to God. ----From which follows another Conſideration, to evidence the needfulneſs and Uſe of Fear, (*viz.*) That without Fear, our Religious Joy may be altogether Abſurd and Groundleſs.

We read in Scripture of the *Hypocrites Hope*, and the *Hypocrites Joy*; implying (as we muſt interpret it) that the Hypocrite, tho he put on Religion only as a Vizor to deceive withal, yet he may ſometimes ground a Religious Hope and Joy upon it: For doubtleſs Men, taking up an outward Form of Godlineſs to deceive others, do very often effectually deceive themſelves; and Pretending to be Holy *when* they are not,

in

in proceſs of Time come to think themſelves *Holy*, though they are not; and ſo their Miſchief becomes ſo much the more deſperate. The word *Hypocriſie* (we know) is originally borrowed from the Stage; and it ſignifies the Acting of a Part: And we have heard of a Stage-player (*Phædrus* in his Apologues tells us of one) who acted a Part ſo long, that he believed himſelf to be the very Perſon that he acted. And ſo I take it to be no extraordinary thing, for the Religious Hypocrite to be given up to the ſame Deluſion, to believe his own Lye; and, having put on Religion at firſt for a Formality, to believe at length, that that Formality is Religion; to believe, that a little Warineſs in ſinning is the Power of Godlineſs; and a Phariſaical Zeal is the Spirit of Saintſhip; and a partial Obedience (ſuch as may beſt ſuit with his Complexion) is ſuch an Obedience, as God will accept of.

And that this in Fact does often come to pass, we may learn from several Instances in Holy-writ. We may learn it from the Instances of the Jews in *Isaiah*'s Time, of whom God says (*Chap.* 58. 2.) *They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways; they ask of me the Ordinances of Justice, and take delight in approaching unto me*; when yet they were at that time so degenerate and loose in Manners, that God even *loathed* their Service; he declares himself to have *hated their Feasts* and *Sabbaths*, and *Sacrifices*, and look'd *on their solemn Meetings as no other than Iniquity*: From this Instance we may learn, that Men may sometimes take delight in the Service of God, when yet God takes no delight in the Services they do him.

We may learn from the Instance of the *Laodiceans*, Rev. 3. That Men may please themselves with the Opinion of being *Rich, and increased with Goods, and wanting nothing*; and yet at the same time

time be *Wretched, and Miſerable, and Poor, and Blind, and Naked.*

We may learn from the Inſtance of thoſe in the Parable, *Matt.* 7. 22. That Men may make confident and cheerful Applications to Chriſt; profeſſing that he is their Lord, and that they have wrought, and laboured by him, and for him; when yet Chriſt ſhall ſay unto them, *I know you not.*

Now theſe are all Inſtances of a Joy that is purely Raſh, and Abſurd, and Groundleſs; and ſuch may the Joy of all Men be, if they take not in Fear to examine the Reaſons of it.

But yet farther ----Suppoſing our Joy to be well and reaſonably grounded; ſuppoſing it to be the Teſtimony of a well-examined Conſcience --*That in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity we have our Converſation in the World*; yet ſtill Fear is needful; and, without its Conduct, even *ſuch* a Joy will be obnoxious to ſeveral Abuſes. As,

1. Joy without Fear may betray us to Pride; it may make us bold with God, and forget our Diſtance; aud *value* our ſelves; though it is certain that the *beſt* Man has nothing valuable in him, in the ſight of God, when once he has quitted his Humility. Now ſo eaſily does Joy betray Men to Pride, that (we ſee) God would not truſt St. *Paul* himſelf with the Vouchſafement of his Viſions, without an Allay, without ſending a *Meſſenger of Satan to buffet him, leaſt he ſhould be exalted above meaſure.* And therefore the ſame Apoſtle adviſes thoſe that are well grounded in Religion---That they *be not high-minded, but fear*: To be high-minded is the direct way to fall; and the only way not to be high-minded, is to fear.

2. Joy without Fear may betray us to Security. We know our Chriſtian Life is compared in Scripture to a Warfare; and though we are not always in actual Conflict with our Enemies, we

we are always in danger of them: Outward Temptations, and Inward Luſts, and the Suggeſtions of the Devil, do always lay round and begirt us; and we can never vanquiſh them ſo far, but that they will have Power left to make a new Aſſault. Thus every Chriſtian is like a Town infeſted by potent Neighbours, and Fear is the only Watch or Sentinel of the Town: So that if we once diſcharge Fear, we give our Enemies their deſired Advantage, that they may take us by Surprize.

3. Joy without Fear may betray us to Slackneſs; which always breeds Danger. For Morality and Religion (which is but Morality well directed) are progreſſive States; and not to go forward in them, is certainly to loſe ground. Becauſe our Progreſs towards Good being partly violent, and as it were up a great Steep; as ſoon as that Violence, which is neceſſary to the Motion, ceaſes, our Natures will run back to

Ill, of their own Accord and Tendency.

Now Joy does often make Men ſlacken their Diligence, and ſo loſe ground, by amuzing them with the Pleaſure it brings with it; as a Traveller is apt to loyter upon a diverting Road: But Fear, like rough Weather at Sea, though it be more unpleaſing, yet it always rids moſt way, and makes the quickeſt Voyages.

To conclude this part: We may obſerve of natural Joy, that although it be a Paſſion ſo pleaſing and cheriſhing to the Soul of Man; yet if it be not kept within bounds; if it be ſuffered to run to exceſs, it ſometimes proves deadly, and directly kills.

So *Gellius* (among other Examples to the ſame purpoſe) tells of a *Roman* Matron, who ſeeing her Son return from the Battle of *Cannæ*, where ſhe apprehended he had been ſlain; immediately fell down dead, being overcome

come with the Exceſs of Joy, which ſhe conceived at the ſight: And thus as natural Joy, though it be the very Life, our Life may, if ungoverned, be the occaſion of natural Miſchiefs; ſo Religious Joy, though it be the very Life of Religion; may, if let looſe from the Diſcipline of Fear, become the occaſion of many ſpiritual Miſchiefs.

Indeed Joy without Fear is only proper for the State of Heaven; and for thoſe Bleſſed Souls who are confirmed in Grace, and can ſin no more: But for frailer Mortals, who are always either under the Power of Sin, or at leaſt under the Aſſaults of it; for ſuch, to rejoyce without the Reſtraint of Fear, is pure Ignorance of our State, as well as an occaſion to betray us unto worſe.

I have now ſhewed of both theſe Affections, how needfull they are to qualifie us in the Diſcharge of our Offices to God and Religion. No Diſpoſition but Joy, is fit to expreſs our Senſe of the

Divine Goodneſs; and keep us affectionately devout: No Diſpoſition but Fear, is fit to expreſs our Senſe of human Frailty, and keep us ſollicitouſly humble. Both of them joined, conſummate the Temper of a good Man's Heart; which I will leave you to contemplate farther under this familiar Emblem ---- A good Man's Heart is like the Flame of a Candle; its Joy makes it mount continually towards Heaven; and its Fear makes it leſſen and tremble, as it mounts. The mention of a Candle puts me in mind of an ancient and pious Cuſtom among Chriſtians; as often as a Candle was brought into the Room, each Perſon in the Company, either by an audible Voice, or at leaſt by ſome Mien of Reverence, expreſſed a mutual Wiſh, that God would ſend the Light everlaſting: We live indeed in an Age, wherein all Forms of Grace, and Uſages of Piety are run out of Countenance: But let not Piety quit the Stage for fear of being

being derided; let not the Scorner's Chair come into ſuch Authority, as to be able to preſcribe Profaneneſs: An honeſt Heathen adviſes us, *Noli Virtute relictâ invidiam pacare*; Let us not leave off doing what is fit, to appeaſe the Envy of ſuch, as would have no ſuch thing done: And therefore, as I have brought in the Candle by way of Symbol, ſo I will likewiſe bring in the Wiſh; and beſeech Almighty God, that he would make us all partakers of Everlaſting Light, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A Con-

A Contemplation of Sin adapted to the Holy Week.

A

SERMON

ON

St. LUKE XXII. 48.

But Jesus said unto him---Judas! Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss?

THE proper Contemplation for this Day is the betraying of our Lord; which (as Circumstances stood) was a necessary Step to his following Crucifixion. For altho' the Jews had resolved in their Council to put him to death; yet, as it is said, *No man*

laid hands on him, for fear of the people. Such was his Eſteem among all thoſe that envied him not, that they could not ſeize him publickly without the Hazard of a Tumult: And therefore they concluded it the ſafeſt Method to ſeize him by Night in his Retirement, where none ſhould be aware to reſiſt their Attempt. To this Deſign of theirs, *Judas* goes (as on this Day) and offers his Aſſiſtance. And having received a vile Reward for the hire of his viler Conſcience, he gives it entirely up to ſerve them, though to his own Perdition. The next Evening a fair Opportunity preſented it ſelf; whereupon he fetches a Company, and conducts them to that mournful Garden, where the Sorrows of our Lord were propitiating for the Sin of *Eden*. And leaſt there ſhould be any Miſtake of the Perſon they were to ſeize, he appointed a Kiſs for the Signal whereby to diſtinguiſh him: And having given this Signal with a ſhame-

leſs

leſs Addreſs, our Lord replies upon him in the Words of my Text--*Judas! Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?*

For a Method to my Diſcourſe upon this Subject, I ſhall (1) make ſome Reflections upon the Fact it ſelf: And (2) I ſhall form a Parallel of it; from whence it may poſſibly appear that the *betraying of our Lord with a Kiſs*, is the Treachery of more than a ſingle *Judas*.

As the Fact was *Judas*'s, our Judgments will not be nice to give it its proper Cenſure: Conſidering it as his, we have no Biaſs of Partiality to hinder us from allowing readily, what we may allow juſtly, that it was a Fact of Horrour: And indeed every Word in the Text tends to colour it with a ſeveral Blackneſs. *Ex. gr. Judas! Betrayeſt thou?* Blackens it with Malice: *Judas! Betrayeſt thou?* Blackens it with Perfidiouſneſs: *Judas! Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man?*

Blac-

Blackens it with Ingratitude: *Judas! Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* Blackens it with Hypocriſie.

For (1) to betray in that Caſe was equivalent to Murder; it was to deliver him into their Hands, who he knew had a Deſign upon his Life: For if he knew not this from his Confederate Rulers, nor from common Rumour; yet it is evident, he knew it from his Maſters own Mouth; (*Matt.* 16. 21.) and therefore this could not be done without expreſs Malice.

(2) The Betrayer was a Servant; a Diſciple; one who had given up his Name and Faith to our Lord; and done himſelf the Honour at leaſt, if no other Benefit, to preach his Goſpel, and to work Miracles in the Power of his Commiſſion; and therefore for *ſuch* a one to betray him, it could not be done without great Perfidiouſneſs.

(3) The Perſon betrayed is called here *the Son of Man*; which was the Hum-

Humbleſt of our Saviour's Titles, an
therefore the moſt uſed by himſelf: Bu
as it was the Humbleſt of his Titles
ſo it was the moſt obliging: For where
fore was he the Son of Man, but only
that he might be the more compaſſio
nate, and beneficial to Mankind? And
to *Judas* himſelf he had always been
Gracious Maſter; and had treated him
with the ſame Reſpect, and given him
both the ſame Advices and Overtures
that he did to the Reſt of the Twelve
and therefore to betray *Him* was high
Ingratitude.

Laſtly, To betray him with a *Kiſs*
which all the World had been uſed to
interpret a conſtant Symbol, either o
Love or Homage, (both which his Ma
ſter had ſo well merited at his Hands
and now to make this a Signal of hi
Treaſon, was to play a Piece of th
moſt groſs Hypocriſie.

Theſe are the Colours of the Fact
and yet there is one more which adds
new

new Horrour to each of theſe, and that is the Obſtinacy of his Purpoſe: For it was not ſudden and indeliberate, but meditated and reſolved, beyond the Power of Advice and Warning, and the moſt awful Menaces to controul it. For before he went out upon his Deſign, theſe are the Words of our Lord directed to his very Face, *Matt.* 26. 24. *The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him; but wo unto that Man by whom he is betrayed; it had been good for that Man if he had not been born*; a Denunciation (one would think) ſufficient to ſtartle the hardieſt Purpoſe; and yet it had no ſuch effect upon *Judas*; for no ſooner had he heard it, but he eſpouſed the Woe, and deſpiſed the Judgment, and went out unaltered to execute his Deſign.

And now would any one imagine there were any poſſible Art to whiten this *Æthiopian*? Would one imagine that the Wit of Man could contrive any De-

Device whereby to acquit *Judas* of his Guilt, and make him appear to have been innocent in all this Tranſaction? Yet ſuch an Art there is pretended to; and the Argument that will prove *Judas* himſelf to have been innocent, is formed thus, *i. e. Judas*'s Fact was foreſeen and foretold; "We hear of it in a "Prophecy as high as the Pſalmiſt; "who not only points out the thing, "but likewiſe the Perſon that was to do "it: From whence it muſt follow that "this Fact muſt likewiſe have been fore-"ordained, and made neceſſary to come "to paſs by the Fate of a Decree; for "otherwiſe, had God left it contingent, "it could not have been certainly fore-"ſeen, and the Prophecy that foretold "it might poſſibly have proved falſe: "Now if the Fact of *Judas* was neceſ-"ſitated by the Force of an irreſiſtible "Decree; wherein was he to be bla-"med for the doing of it? For where "there no Choice there is can be no "Guilt;

" Guilt; and where there is a Fatality " of acting, there can be no Choice. Fatality of acting is the darling Notion, under which profligate Minds hope to ſhelter themſelves, and to fence off both the Shame and Trouble of their Sins: Although at the Expence of God's Holineſs, whom they make to be the Authour of all Sin; and at the Expence of his Juſtice, if he ſhall condemn any for it.

I ſhall not enter far into the Merits of the Argument; becauſe an Argument that carries with it ſuch immoral Conſequences, and ſuch blaſphemous Inſinuations, and may be an Apology for Devils as well as Men, ought rather to be deteſted than diſputed. I mention it for Caution; becauſe it may be obſerved to ſpread; and to ſpread with a grave Air, as a Notion the moſt Religious, and the moſt Orthodox; becauſe it is (as they ſay) the main Reſult of the Predeſtinarian Scheme; but

propagated by ſuch, as care neither for Religion nor Truth, nor any Scheme relating to either, farther than it may be ſubſervient to their vitious Inclinations.

The miſerable *Judas* was not aware of any Power in this Argument to ſuſtain his Mind, when he came to reflect upon what he had done: He could not interpret that the Fore-knowledge of God had any Cauſality or Influence upon his Sin; becauſe he found Cauſe enough for that ariſing from his own Deportment: For having given way to a covetous Deſire, and fed it up to Maſtery by the Opportunities of the Bagg, and harden'd his Heart by this ſinful Indulgence, againſt all Impreſſions of wholſome Counſel; he was convinced that the Prophecy of his Treaſon could not fail of its Event; becauſe, the Temptation offering, he could not chooſe but do what he did; he had indeed loſt all his Power and Liberty to do better: Though yet the Neceſſity he then lay under

under was not Fatal, but Natural; not of God's decreeing, but of his own procuring. Under theſe juſter Apprehenſions of his Crime, he is ſaid to have repented (in the worſt Senſe of the Word) that is, he grieved, he deſpaired, and then he hanged himſelf. And though we allow that his Paſſions tranſported him too extravagantly in theſe latter Violences, yet even from what was rational in his Grief we may learn this Leſſon. That when an awakened Conſcience comes to eſtimate the Nature of its Guilt, there will be found but poor ſhelter in all thoſe Palliations that can be formed by humane Subtilty, and licencious Wit.

And now I doubt not, but that when we contemplate this Fact of *Judas*, we ſeriouſly condemn it; and our Hearts would riſe againſt any one that ſhould ſay that we our ſelves would poſſibly be guilty of the like: *But the Heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately*

wicked, who can know it? Says the Prophet: *Who can know it?* Not even he that carries it in his own Breaſt: For as what is wicked will certainly deceive; ſo what deceives muſt neceſſarily be in ſome Meaſure dark and unknown.

Our Saviour tells us remarkably concerning the Jews of his Time, that they remonſtrated againſt the Wickedneſs of their Forefathers in killing the Prophets; and cried----*If we had been in their Days, we would not have been partakers in the Blood of thoſe Holy Men:* And yet after all this ſo ſenſibly ſaid, thoſe very Perſons ſhed the Blood of one greater and holier than all that had gone before him. And it is poſſible, through the ſame Deceitfulneſs of Heart, that we our ſelves, even while we condemn the Fact of *Judas*, would not ſtick to do that which will amount to an equal Guilt. Be ſure that to betray Chriſt is not one ſingle Man's Crime: Nor may we think that this fourth Day of the Week was devo-

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ted by the Church to particular Humiliation, becauſe our Lord was once betrayed on this Day, much leſs becauſe *Judas* betrayed him; but it was becauſe every Sin is a Traitour, and *Judas* is but the common Reſemblance of all prevaricating and unfaithful Diſciples.

And to convince us that this Cenſure is true; I ſhall proceed to ſhew, that a ſinful Life in a profeſſed Chriſtian carries in it all the Marks of *Judas* his Treaſon: It has the ſame Malice, Perfidiouſneſs, Ingratitude, and Hypocriſie; and leads on to the ſame Obſtinacy, more than moſt are aware of.

To ſpeak to theſe Particulars in that Order that is moſt natural; that is, by paſſing from the leſſer to the greater: The firſt Charge of a ſinful Life in a Chriſtian is Perfidiouſneſs.

Perfidiouſneſs conſiſts in the Breach of plighted Faith: Now if we are in Covenant, we muſt have plighted our Faith; and if we are in Covenant

with God, we muſt have plighted our Faith to live Godly; and if we are in the Chriſtian Covenant, we muſt have plighted our Faith, that Chriſt ſhould be our Lord and Maſter; For that ſaying of his to the Twelve---*Ye call me Lord and Maſter, and ſo I am*, is eſſentially applicable to all other Diſciples: If therefore under theſe Circumſtances, we preſume to live ſinfully, we act againſt what we have engaged; we allow what we have renounced; and we contemn him whom we profeſs to be our Lord and Maſter: And what can this be other than Perfidiouſneſs? Every Man's Conſcience, in the pure natural State, is his implicit Obligation to God, that he will do no other than what is Juſt and Right; and from the Breach of this Obligation ariſes ſimple Guilt: But Religion is a formal and expreſs Contract with God; that we will do no other than what is Juſt and Right, and the Breach of this Contract adds Per-

Perfidiouſneſs to that ſimple Guilt. Here-upon it is that under the Jewiſh Covenant, our Saviour calls thoſe of his Time, *An Evil and Adulterous Generation*; not becauſe the particular Sin of Adultery was ſo frequent in that Age; but becauſe, by every Kind of Sin, a Man under the Contract of Religion, runs into that Character wherewith *Solomon* deſcribes the Adultereſs (*viz.*) *He forſaketh the Guide of his Youth, and breaketh the Covenant of his God.* When therefore our Saviour calls thoſe Jews ---- *An Evil and Adulterous Generation*, he lays a higher Charge of Guilt upon them, than any of the Gentiles were obnoxious to: The Gentiles indeed were *Evil*, but not *Adulterous*, in this Senſe of the Word; becauſe having never eſpouſed themſelves to God, nor engaged Obedience to his Commands, they could not formally break Faith with him, ſo as the Jews had done. Now Perfidiouſneſs is a Name of no ſmall Reproach; nor

ever can it be otherwiſe ſo long as there is any Senſe of Honour, or Repute in the World: Becauſe the Point of Honour conſiſts principally in keeping our Words and Engagements; and when we once fail of this, we are deplored; nothing is further expected from us, but what is diſhonourable and baſe. From this Point of Honour is naturally formed ſo ſtrong an Argument, that we may obſerve Men frequently overborn by it, to waſte and ruine their Conſciences for the meer ſake of keeping their Words. For hence it is that Men do many ſinful Actions without any other Temptation, and for no other Argument than that of *Herod*, viz. They have raſhly paſt their Words to do ſo; and therefore their Honour lies at ſtake, and muſt be acquitted by the performance. But this Deception is very groſs, and ſeems to paſs upon Chriſtians from a great Negligence of Thought; For if the Point of Honour lies

lies in keeping our Word, let the Chriſtian remember that his Word is paſt already on the other ſide: And therefore whatſoever Promiſe leads to Sin, that Promiſe is in it ſelf perfidious and ſhameful; and the performance of it can only be *more* ſo, and in a higher Meaſure. And hence it follows, that no Honour can be ſhewn in a ſinful Inſtance; and that nothing but Virtue is truly honourable: And that Honour and Conſcience in a Chriſtian, can never be otherwiſe than of the ſame ſide; becauſe a Chriſtian is one that has moſt ſolemnly paſt his Word---not to act any thing contrary to his Duty to God; and in the Performance of this Engagement, both his Honour and his Conſcience are equally and only ſecured.

But by the way we may obſerve, what a vain Riddle Honour is according to ſome Men's Notions, ſince the Devil can prevail upon them by it to ruine their Conſciences; and yet at the

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ſame time God cannot prevail upon them, by the ſame Argument, to preſerve their Conſciences.

Well done good and faithful---is the Stile to thoſe that ſhall be received into their Maſter's Joy: And there is a Conſequence not only of Order, but of Cauſality too in the Words, *Good and Faithful*: For that to be good is that alone, that can make us faithful; and every Sin makes as certain a Breach upon our Faith, as it does upon our Juſtice.

I paſs to the ſecond Charge of a ſinful Life in a Chriſtian; and that is Ingratitude.....

Ingratitude takes its Riſe from the receiving of Benefits: For although we may be injurious to any, we can be ingrateful to none, but thoſe by whom we have profited. And have we not profited by our Lord? Are they not Benefits that he has purchaſed for us? Are Redemption and Pardon, Salvation and Glory, no Benefits? Or are they

they ſuch Benefits as we have renounced? Do we deſpiſe the Hopes of them, and diſclaim all our Pretences to them, for the ſake of our Sins? If we do not; our Sins, ſo directly affecting our Benefactor, marks us with an Ingratitude, as great as his Benefits are deſirable. I believe no Sinners are ſo hardy as to renounce theſe Benefits; but while we neglect them at leaſt for the ſake of Sins; tell me, Is it not a mighty Benefit we receive from the Patience and Forbearance of God? Which ſhould it be ſuſpended, ſhould his Anger be let looſe upon us for a Moment, what would become of all our ſinful Enjoyments? It would reduce us to a State, where we ſhould for ever repent without Virtue, and be miſerable without Relief. Now let any one renounce this Benefit if he can find in his heart to do ſo.

But beſides the Value of the Benefits themſelves, there are other Circumſtances

ces that naturally aggravate the Guilt of Ingratitude; and I ſhall offer to your Conſideration two of this kind.

Firſt, Let us conſider the Purchaſe of theſe Benefits, and what they coſt the Donor: For our Lord did not give us of that that coſt him nought: *It coſt more* (ſays the Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking proleptically of his Paſſion) *it coſt more to redeem a Man's Soul*, that is, more than any Man can pay; and not only ſo, but more than any Man can imagine. It coſt our Lord the humbling of himſelf, and the voiding of his own Felicity; it coſt him ſtrong Crying and Tears, bloody Sweats and Agonies, Torments of Body and Deſolation of Spirit, of ſuch a Preſſure as is unconceivable. And is not all this Price to be regarded? And yet Sin regards it no more than the Jews did, when they flouted at his Sufferings upon the Croſs. We ſometimes take the Privilege to undervalue the Liberality of a dying Miſer,

Miſer, becauſe he only beſtows that he cannot keep; and the Neceſſity of leaving it moves more with him towards the Diſpoſal, than the Benefit of the Receiver: But if a Man ſhall voluntarily ſtreighten and ſtrip himſelf to ſupply our Wants, and to make us rich; in this Caſe the very Love appears as obliging as the Benefit; and Ingratitude to ſuch a Benefactor muſt conſequently be of a double Stain.

2. Let us conſider what is the Motive of our Ingratitude, whenſoever we are ungrateful to our Lord. We may ſee our Caſe properly in that of *Judas*: His Motive was piec'd up of theſe three Concurrences; an Importunate Avarice, a poor Reward, and a Confederacy with a ſpiteful and pitileſs Crew of the Jewiſh Rulers: And the ſame in all Reſemblance is our own. For (1) whatſoever Luſt it is that prevails with us to ſin, it is as baſe as *Judas*'s Avarice; it has no other Worth than what we our

ſelves

ſelves have given it, by ſuffering it to grow, and to become importunate: For conſider it in it ſelf, and it is an *Enemy that wars againſt our Soul*; ſo that for a rational Man to deliver himſelf up to ſuch a Power, it is as much to his Shame, as it is to his Miſchief. In the next place---whatſoever the Reward is we may get or hope for, what can it be but like *Judas* his thirty Pieces, a poor Return in compariſon of the Stake? *Judas* his Pieces look'd dazling and pleaſant to him at the firſt ſight; but by that time he had had them a little while in his Hands, ſuch a loathing Regret grew upon his Mind, that he could not enjoy in the leaſt what he had ſo ſtrongly coveted: And are the Gains of Sin frequently more ſucceſsful? Does Sin bring in that that bleſſes our Hopes, and ſatisfies our Deſires? If it does, if it is only becauſe our Reaſon is ſo long alienated: For one wiſe Thought will certainly void all thoſe Advantages we pleaſe our ſelves withal. But

But laſtly, What is our Confederacy but purely like that of *Judas*? It lies with a Crew of Spirits infernal, malicious and pitileſs; whoſe Aim is to work our Ruine; and when they have wrought it, are ready to reply upon our Moan, as the Jewiſh Rulers did---- *What is that to us? See thou to that.*

Now could we be ingrateful to our Lord for the ſake of ſome other Maſter, who would equally reward us; could we deſpiſe his Benefits for the Proſpect of others, wherewith we could be equally content; there might be ſome Apology in this, for our Wiſdom at leaſt, though not for our Truth: But to quit our Lord for the ſake of a Faction, animated with Spite indifferently both againſt him and our ſelves; and for a Proſpect which we are ſure can never turn to any better Account; this is a Conſideration that makes our Ingratitude look both foul and fooliſh to the laſt Degree.

3. The

3. The next Charge of a ſinful Life in a Chriſtian is Hypocriſie----

Hypocriſie is to ſeem to be what we are not; or to act contrary to what we pretend. Now foraſmuch as the Hypocrite's Portion is pointed at in Scripture as the ſevereſt of all other; and in conſequence Hypocriſie is rationally deemed to be a ſin in ſome Reſpects great above all other; it happens that many who live very looſely, and take no care to live otherwiſe, will yet pleaſe themſelves with this Reflection, that they are no Hypocrites, becauſe they do not pretend to be better than they are. A ſtrange ſort of Conſolation, this! And ſtrange it is how it has got ſuch footing in the Chriſtian VVorld?

For can we think it a leſs Degree of Impiety for a Sinner to be impudent, than to be modeſt; or to *glory in his Shame*, rather than be ſhame-faced when he does amiſs? This is an Opinion contrary both to revealed Truth, and all

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Appearance of Reaſon---We are told that God proceeded to execute his remarkable Judgment upon *Sodom*, becauſe their Sins were bold, and avowed, and cared for no Covering: For ſo the Prophet *Iſaiah* interprets it, *Chap.* 3. where he tells us that the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, were likewiſe ripe for the Judgment of God, becauſe they were arrived to the Impudence of *Sodom*; which he ſays was---*not to hide their Sins, but to declare* and profeſs them. And who can doubt but that Religion ſuffers more from the Scandal, and Men have more miſchief from the Example, when they that bear the Name of Religion live in open Iniquity; than when either Shame or Fear obliges them to conceal it? We muſt allow that Hypocriſie is the greateſt Aggravation of Sin; and therefore in Reaſon its future Portion muſt be the ſevereſt: But then the Queſtion ſtill remains, who are the Hypocrites? And to determine this, the Point

is not whether Men in their private Converſation pretend to be better than they are; but whether they pretend to be Chriſtians; whether this be not their publick Profeſſion: And if it be, no doubt but they pretend ſufficiently to be better than they are. This therefore is the great Hypocriſie to pretend to be Chriſtians; and yet live ſinfully; to *name the Name of Chriſt, and yet not depart from Iniquity*: And whoever does thus, he is one of thoſe Hypocrites whoſe Portion we fear; *whether his Sins go before him to Judgement*, that is, are bold and known; or whether *they follow after*, that is, are ſecret, and as yet undiſcovered. This holy Profeſſion of ours, when accompanied with an immoral Behaviour, is that which exactly reſembles the Kiſs of *Judas*; for it gives our Saviour the Signal of Homage and Reſpect, and at the ſame time makes uſe of it to betray him.

And

And this brings me to the fourth Charge of a ſinful Life in a Chriſtian, which is Malice.

But who ſhall we find to own this Charge? "For why? Says the Sinner, "How is it poſſible that I ſhould entertain Malice againſt the Fountain "of Mercy? For what Reaſon? For "what End? Far be it from me! I "confeſs I have ſinned in compliance "with my Luſts, but never with Ma-"lice againſt my Saviour; I deteſt "and abhor it; it never was in my "Intention; and how then can it be "in my Charge? This is the Plea; but all deceiving and deluſory: For if in this Caſe our Intention might give bounds and limits to our Crimes; ſee whither it would reach: By the ſame Argument a Sinner might not only acquit himſelf from Malice, but even from ſimple Guilt. For ſuppoſe the Plea formed thus: "I confeſs I have "ſinned very often for my Pleaſure,

" and for my Gain; but in theſe Sins " I intended not the Obliquity of the " Action, but only the Convenience; " not to offend God, or break his " Commandments, but only to ac- " commodate my ſelf; and therefore " ſince the Obliquity was not in my " Intention, how can it be in my " Charge? Now the Plea formed on this manner ſerves as effectually to acquit from ſimple Guilt, as the former does from Malice.

But let us conſider what all this while is meant here by Intention: It is not that honeſt ſincere Intention; that purpoſe of Integrity, not to conſent to any ſinful Act; for this Intention is indeed ſufficient to excuſe, becauſe it renders all Sin perfectly involuntary: But in the mentioned Caſes there is a plenary Conſent to the ſinful Act; only accompanied with ſuch a Careleſneſs of Mind, as hinders from conſidering the Meaſures and extent of its Guilt:

Now

Now it is a main point of our Duty to conſider this; and ſuppoſing we do not conſider it, that cannot be drawn into our Apology, but into our Crime. When therefore the Word of God has declared the Nature of Actions, and the Extent of their Guilt; theſe Meaſures are not to be reſtrained by the Negligence of our Intention; but if we engage in the Act, we engage in the entire Guilt of it. Let us ſee then what the Scripture declares concerning the Malice of Sin. The Holy Scripture beſides calling all ſin Rebellion, becauſe it is a Breach of our ſworn Fealty; and *as the Sin of Witchcraft*, (not formally Witchcraft, but *as* Witchcraft) becauſe it gives an Implicit Honour to the Devil: Beſides calling it *Abomination*, becauſe of God's irreconcileable Averſion to it; and a *grieving and doing Deſpite unto the Spirit of Grace*, becauſe of his compaſſionate Waiting and Aſſiſtance to prevent it: In reſpect of each of which

circumſtances Sin cannot be committed without Malice involved: It declares particularly concerning our Lord, that Sin in a Chriſtian thus affects him, (*viz.*) That a Chriſtian going on in a ſinful Courſe of Life, *Treads under foot the Son of God; and counts the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing; and Crucifies to himſelf the Son of God afreſh; and puts him to open ſhame.* And the Reaſon of all this is, becauſe the Blood of our Lord was ſhed to deſtroy Sin; and his Honour is concerned in the deſtroying of it; and therefore if we chooſe and prefer Sin, we betray his Honour, we ſlight his Love, we reject his Government, we deſpiſe his Blood, and bring a Scandal upon the Covenant that was ſealed by it. Now can any one be guilty of theſe Violations without Malice? Or does Malice ceaſe to be Malice, becauſe it is not heeded? When a Man has been ſufficiently warned that ſuch an Act is malicious,

licious, and yet reſolves to commit that Act; though he does it ſo heedleſly as not to feel any Movements of the Paſſion, yet he ſhall be adjudged malicious, as well from the Effect, as from the Precaution that was given him againſt it. If Inconſideration could excuſe from Malice, *Judas* himſelf might have come in for the Excuſe. For it is ſaid----*That when he found that his Maſter was condemned, he repented*: Now he had been told before that this would be the Conſequence; but it ſeems his Mind was ſo taken up with his Money, that he did not conſider it; till ſuch time as his Conſcience told him that his not conſidering it, could admit of no Excuſe.

And now I have run through theſe ſeveral Charges of a ſinful Life in a Chriſtian: And from the whole we may conclude; that if Men are reſolved to ſin, happy *Tyre* and *Sidon*! happy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*! where there were

no ſuch Vows and Engagements, no ſuch Benefits and Obligations, no ſuch Warnings and Precautions, no ſuch Scandal without, nor Convictions within, as the Chriſtian is obnoxious to, to ſwell and aggravate the Guilt of all that he does amiſs.

The laſt Circumſtance I obſerved in the Fact of *Judas*, was his Obſtinacy; perſiſting unchanged in his purpoſe, notwithſtanding he was checkt with that piercing Denunciation, *Woe to the Man by whom he is betrayed, it were better for that Man, that he had not been born.* Now this is an Obſtinacy that looks like a Wonder; and yet upon farther thought it will appear to be ſuch a Wonder as is very common. For is there not a Denunciation exactly parallel to this, wherein all Sinners are concerned (*Luke* 17. 1.) *Woe to the Man by whom Offences come; it were better for that Man that a Milſtone were hanged about his Neck, and he caſt into the Sea?* And yet how often

often is this Denunciation heard without any abatement of offending? And how often are the Goſpel Menaces of Excluſion from Heaven, inculcated by the Apoſtle with this Warning againſt our fond Miſtakes----- *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words, for becauſe of theſe things the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Diſobedience*: How often are theſe Menaces received into the Ears of Men, as unchanged, and unſhaken as *Judas* was? And where then is the Difference in their Obſtinacy?

But here the deceitful Heart is apt to whiſper, that "This was the Rock a-"gainſt which *Judas* ſplit, he was ob-"ſtinate *to the laſt*; he turned not *at* "*all*; and therefore his Folly was that "that procured his Miſchief; for had "he repented, no doubt but his Maſter "would have forgiven him. It is true, *Judas* was obſtinate to the laſt: And who elſe can tell for himſelf what ob-ſtinate Act may *not* be his laſt? But as for

for *Judas* his Pardon ſuppoſing he had repented; it is vain to argue from a ſuppoſition ſo precarious: If we will argue any thing that is juſt from the Caſe, it muſt be this--That *Judas* could not have repented, though he would: And what Sinner elſe can tell how long himſelf may be in an abler Capacity? I ſay that *Judas* could not have repented, though he would; becauſe I am ſure that no Man can repent after God's Grace has deſerted him. It is impoſſible that ſinful Nature can turn it ſelf from Sin: Nature *alone* may nauſeate or fall out with particular Sins; and its very Deſires may fail towards thoſe, that it has ſometimes moſt eagerly purſued: Nature *alone* may fear, nay it cannot but fear the Puniſhment of Sins; and therefore may be ſorry that ever it committed them: And as theſe Symptoms do put on the Vizor of Repentance; ſo it is no doubt but that they are too oft miſtaken for the True: But

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Nature alone can never turn the Heart into a State of Acceptance, that is, into the State of a mourning, and ſollicitous, and active Love: And nothing is truly to repent but this; and this is only the Work of the Grace of God. But then---- What an Abſurdity is it for any Man to preſume upon this neceſſary Grace for hereafter; while he is *now* directly provoking it to deſert him?

If therefore we would not be like *Judas* (as ſure we would not be) we muſt have a care of living unprofitably under the Means of Salvation; for they are Means which, if they *melt* not the Heart, they certainly harden it. We muſt have a care of reſting in a formal Religion: For if Formality will ſecure God's preventing Grace, *Judas* had had a fairer Pretence to it, than moſt of the preſent World: For *he* was a Man in all appearance of very commendable Manners, and a Converſation altogether inoffenſive: Had it been otherwiſe,

wiſe, our Saviour would never have eſcaped the Jews Reproach for having ſuch a blot in his Train: Nay, we ſee that in the very Night of his Treaſon, and while it was enquired among themſelves, who might poſſibly be the Traitor, *Judas* lay no more under the common Suſpicion of bearing an ill Mind, than any of the Twelve. He had but one Sin; and that a ſecret one; and that contented to act in a narrow Sphere; and that capable of as much Apology, as any Man can make for any one Sin; and yet we ſee to what a bulk of Miſchief it grew. Although perhaps it is but a vulgar Soleciſm, to ſay that any Man has but one Sin: Perhaps no Sin has ever been ſingle from the beginning of the World: For one Sin always makes Room and Arguments, and even Neceſſities for more. But could it poſſibly be ſingle; yet it is like a mortal Wound which is equivalent to many in its Power to kill: One Sin breaks

breaks our Covenant; one Sin deſpiſes the Law-giver; one Sin ſets a certain barr againſt the Love of God; one Sin waſts the Conſcience, and turns all our Good into Hypocriſie, as well as many. If therefore we will not be like *Judas*, it is neceſſary to forſake every *evil* way; to have reſpect to *every* Commandment; to receive Chriſt for our Maſter without *Reſerve*; to love the Lord Jeſus in *Sincerity*; to give Glory to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb with *ſingleneſs of heart*; for this is the only means to do ſo with Joy, (and God grant we may do ſo) for ever, and ever.

The

The Danger of Indifferency.

A *most excellent* SERMON ON St. MATTH. VI. 24.

No Man can ſerve two Maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other: Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.

IT is probable that common Obſervation had made this Sentence ..... *No Man can ſerve two Maſters*---paſs into a Proverb; and the truth of it is beyond diſpute: For if a Man be obliged by Contract to a particular Maſter,

ſter, how can ſuch a one have either Right or Capacity to ſerve a ſecond? Or---put the caſe otherwiſe---If a Man be not ſo obliged to a particular Maſter, but has reſerved a Freedom to divide himſelf betwixt two, yet how ſhall he diſcharge it?

For, ſuppoſing the Authority of theſe Two to interfere, how can both take place? Or, ſuppoſing their Commands are contrary, how can both be executed? Or, ſuppoſing their Diſpoſitions to be very unlike; how can both be ſerved with an equal Regard? Thus the Proverb is true, in the civil Senſe of it. Now our Saviour turning this Proverb into a moral Senſe (as he does in the Text) implies thus much by it, (*viz.*) That we have all Two poſſible Maſters in reference to Good and Evil: The firſt is God, who directs and commands us to Good; and him we *ought* to ſerve: The ſecond is Mammon, or (to ſpeak in a proper Latitude) any of our natu-

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ral ſinful Luſts, which lead and incite us unto Evil; and theſe we may ſerve, if we think fit: But warning is here given us, that it is impoſſible we ſhould ſerve both: There is ſuch a Repugnancy between the Service of God and of our Luſts, that it is impoſſible to attend both of them: Our very Affections cannot apply themſelves to both; becauſe the Application to either of them does naturally beget a diſreſpect, and loathing of the other. And this is the meaning of that Reaſon alledged in the Text---*No Man can ſerve two Maſters---- For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other*; i. e. Let a Man but endeavour to ſerve theſe two Maſters, and he ſhall find that the one will neceſſarily gain upon, and the other as neceſſarily loſe in his Affections.

We find, *Rev.* 3. 16. that the World of Profeſſors are diſtinguiſh'd into three Kinds---The *Hot*, the *Cold*, and the *Luke-*

Lukewarm: By the *Hot* are meant those who are truly Religious, serving God uniformly, and with affection; By the *Cold* are meant the Carnal and Vitious, who turn their backs upon God, and, under the false Notion of Liberty, live after their own Will and Pleasure: By the *Lukewarm* are meant the formal indifferent Christians, who mix their *Heat* and their *Cold* into a middle temper; that is, who pretend to divide their Heart between good and evil, and to serve both God and their own Lusts together. Now the Text affords three Lessons, which bear a proper Respect to these three Kinds of Men.

The first is---That God is our Rightful Master, and him that we ought to Serve.

The second---That if we will not serve God, there is no Liberty got by it; for we must serve our own Lusts.

The third That to ſerve both God and our own Luſts is impracticable, and to think to do ſo is fatally deceiving.

Of theſe in order. (1) And this is a Truth I need not take pains to prove; becauſe the ſlighteſt Conſideration of God's Dominion, and Power, and Goodneſs, and Covenant, and Promiſes, is ſufficient to convince us, that our ſervice is due unto God; and that upon all the Titles that ſervice can be due. And the Truth is, That when we ſerve not God, our Exceptions lie not againſt the Maſter, but againſt the Service: For our Souls do unavoidably acknowledge God's right to command us; but at the ſame time our Luſts have a natural averſion to his commands; and therefore ſuggeſt hard things concerning them, and ſet our affections againſt them; and ſo Men come to be *afraid* to be Religious, and conceive an ill Opinion of Piety, not (as reaſon would

expect) becauſe, they have tried it; but only becauſe they have *not* tried it. And therefore all I ſhall attempt upon this Head ſhall be to recommend the ſervice it ſelf.

If a Maſter command us to do ſomething for our own good, we may look upon ſuch a one as our Rightful Maſter, not only in his own Right, but alſo in the Right of his command: For to do our ſelves good, we all allow to be an obliging Law; a Law that we would obſerve, though there were no other Authority to back it. Now the whole Law of God, and all that he commands us to ſerve him in, is no other than a neceſſary method of doing our ſelves good.

God lays no burden of Duty upon us with the bare intention of burdening us by it; which hard Maſters are wont to do; nay, God lays no burden upon us with reſpect to his own Advantage, which the beſt Maſters are allowed to do; but

all his Service points at *our* Advantage; being ſimply intended to bring us near and endear us to himſelf, and make us reaſonably capable of his Love and Reward. Indeed God argues, and threatens, and wooes, and intreats us to ſerve him; but after all this, it would be both abſurd and profane in us to think that he can be profited by our ſervice; The ſole Motive of all his Importunity is---Becauſe his ſervice is the only means of ſerving our ſelves. *Oh that there were ſuch a Heart in this People, that they would fear me and keep my Commandments always*, Cries God, *Deut.* 5. 9. But all the purpoſe of that paſſionate Requeſt is this, *That it might be well with them. Oh that there were ſuch a Heart in this People that they would fear and ſerve me, that* (ſo doing) *it might be well with them!* Becauſe *without* ſo doing, according to the eternal Laws of Wiſdom and Holineſs, it cannot be well with us; we cannot be rendered worthy

worthy the Acceptance and Mercies of God.

The peculiar Stile of our Saviour throughout the New Teſtament is, Ὁ Κύριος, our Lord and Maſter; and as he came to call and recover us into his Service, ſo the main Tendency of all his Actions was to ſhew, what great Reaſon and Need we have of coming into his Service.

He taught us this in an Emblem, when he cured all bodily Diſeaſes; *The Blind received ſight, the Lame walkt, the Lepers were cleanſed, the Deaf heard, and the Dead were raiſed up, by him.* He did theſe Works, but not ſimply for the Works ſake; theſe were not the End of his Coming: *He came to ſave Sinners*; and his Healing was but a Symbolical way of Teaching us----That our Souls are diſeaſed, and maimed, and dropping unto Death; and that he alone has the Divine Power to remedy theſe Diſorders. Look into our ſelves---and there

behold the Blind---ſuch are they that cannot diſcern their own true Intereſt: Behold the Lame---ſuch are they who cannot walk in the good way directed them; behold the Lepers---ſuch are they who are ſpotted and foul with moral Corruption; behold the Deaf---ſuch are they who have an Averſion to hear the words of Wiſdom; behold the Dead---ſuch are they who are grown ſtiff and ſtupid, under the cuſtomary Habits of Sin. Theſe fatal Diſorders we are all naturally ſubject to; and the Commands of our Lord are no other than a Courſe of Preſcriptions, that are neceſſary for our Cure. Had any of thoſe Blind, Lame, or Lepers in the Goſpel, taken up ſuch a Prejudice againſt our Saviour, that they would not brook to be healed by him; we ſhould have lookt upon ſuch a Behaviour as very abſurd. 'Tis ſaid indeed, that ſome miſſed of healing becauſe of their *Unbelief*, i. e. becauſe they did not believe that Chriſt could

could heal them; but we read of none ſo fooliſh as to believe that Chriſt could heal them, and yet would not be healed by him: And yet this is the Sinner's caſe; ſo fooliſh and abſurd is he (will he believe it of himſelf?) *He will not come to his Maſter, that he may have Life.* Not, that Life, Eternal Life can be lookt upon as a refuſable or little thing, in any ones Eye; but yet, it may *not* be lookt upon; our Eye may be engaged and taken up with other Objects; and ſo the Sinners's Eye is taken up with the Proſpect of Liberty; he comes not to his Maſter, becauſe he hopes to be *free*; to be his own Maſter, and not ſerve at all; but this is a groſs Miſtake; for contrive we, how we will, we muſt neceſſarily ſerve; and if we will not ſerve God, we muſt ſerve our own Luſts---which is the ſecond Leſſon of my Text.

The Pride and Folly of our Nature diſcover themſelves together in nothing

ſo much, as in the Pretence to Liberty: For Man was born to ſerve; and God has only left it to our Diſcretion, what Maſter we will chooſe---we may ſerve him, if we pleaſe; and his Service certainly brings us to that Liberty we long for: But no ſooner are we looſe from his Service, but we neceſſarily fall into the Service of our own Luſts, and Corruption; which is an infamous, and fruitleſs, and deſperate Bondage.

We find the Phariſees, *Jo:* 8. boaſting of Liberty as their Birth-right, *We were born free*: But our Saviour checks them with this Anſwer, *v.* 34. *Whoſoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* Alas! We over-ween, and miſtake our ſelves; none are born free: Nature it ſelf makes us Bonds; and the unruly Deſires we are born withall, bring us to Slavery unavoidable, unleſs we eſcape through the Protection of our rightful Maſter; *If the Son make us free, then are we free indeed*, v. 36. It is therefore that

that Chriſt is call'd our Redeemer, that is, he who buys us out of Slavery; and his Service is our actual Redemption, that is, it inſtates us in that Freedom, which he has purchaſed for us: And every Advance of ſincere Holineſs brings us nearer to that Liberty which God himſelf enjoys; for ſays our Saviour, *Joh.* 6. 40. *The Servant that is perfect, ſhall be as his Maſter.* And (in the mean time) when we conſider, that the Service of God ſets a Man free from the Diſturbance of baſe Actions, and from the Dominion of ſhameful Deſires; that it makes a Man act honourably, ſafely, and advantageouſly; with Approbation of Conſcience, and Satisfaction of Mind, and a joyful Proſpect; with the Praiſe of God, with the Praiſe of good Men, and with the Envy of all thoſe that praiſe him not; that it makes a Man act even as he *pleaſes*, having firſt determined that nothing ſhall pleaſe him but what is fit; we cannot doubt, but that the Service of God

God procures the greateſt Freedom that human Life is capable of; and is ſuch a State, as every Man who duely conſiders it, would freely chooſe---But if God pleaſe us not for a Maſter, ſee what will follow---God himſelf pronounces this Sentence upon the *Iſraelites*, Deut. 28. 47. *Becauſe thou wouldeſt not ſerve the Lord thy God, therefore thou ſhalt ſerve thine Enemies, who ſhall put an iron Yoak upon thee until they have deſtroyed thee.* And this Sentence is morally fulfilled upon every Sinner: For when we turn our Backs upon God, we naturally fall into the Hands of our Enemies, *The ſinful Luſts that war againſt our Soul*; and from them comes the *iron Yoak*; the befooling Slavery, that treats us with pleaſure, till ſuch time as we cannot get free; and then it galls and preſſes through Soul and Body.

The Holy Scripture points out the State of this Bondage, in three Degrees of its Growth upon Sinners.

(1) As

(1) As St. *Peter* tells us, 2 *Ep.* 3. 3. *They walk after their own Luſts*: Men firſt comply with, and then they *walk after their own Luſts*: The Expreſſion implies, that Luſts, when they are complied with, grow ſtrong and maſterly; inſomuch that the Man cannot govern his Luſts, but the Luſts govern the Man; they lead the way, and he *walks after*, as a Slave does after his Chain. And from that time forth he does not act freely, though he pretend to do ſo; but is acted and driven on by thoſe Deſires and Paſſions which he cannot govern.

And from this follows a ſecond Advance of the Sinner's Bondage, which the ſame Apoſtle tells us of, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. *They cannot ceaſe to ſin.*

For thus it is, with them that give themſelves up to any long ill Uſages; they cannot leave them, though they would: Though Conſcience blames, and Fear checks, and Shame or other Miſchiefs bid them forbear, they *cannot*: Sin becomes

comes *a Law unto them* (as the Apoſtle calls it, *Rom.* 7. 21.) i. e. A commanding Power to which they *muſt* ſubmit.

Thus in every Act of Intemperance, Wantonneſs, Fraud, Malice, and the like, the Sin gets power over the Man; and what at firſt was choice, by degrees grows into Force; and what ſometimes was Pleaſure, in a while becomes Neceſſity: The Man cannot ceaſe from the Acts of them, or at leaſt from the Thoughts and Deſires of them, which in the Eye of God is of equal Guilt. We have the Caſe deſcribed in a ſingle Inſtance, *Prov.* 2. *ad fin.* where the intemperate Man, after a Turn of his Good-fellowſhip, finds himſelf ſhamed, ſcorned, beaten and expoſed to the utmoſt Hazards; inſomuch that, with a Struggle of Repentance, he cries, *When ſhall I awake?* When ſhall I get free from this ſtupid infamous State? But immediately his Luſt comes over him, and controuls him, and cries--*When I awake I will ſeek it yet again.*

The

The laſt finiſhing of this Bondage is from a foreign Power, and that is the Devil; for ſo St. *Paul* tells us, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *They are taken Captive by him, at his Will.* The Devil is always buſie to undoe us, but cuſtom to do evil gives us entirely up to his Plot and Deſign: We cannot reſiſt him, at any time, by our own ſtrength, but by the protecting Power of God's Grace; which being once ſinned away, the Man has loſt his Guard, and leaves himſelf expoſed to all the Malice of his Enemy.

What a ſearching Rebuke was that which our Saviour gave *Judas*, Jo. 13. 27. *What thou doſt, do quickly*: It was a full Conviction to him that his Treaſon was known; and yet offered with ſo much Meekneſs, as was ſufficient, to melt down the Malice of any one that was capable of repenting: But, the Devil having got hold of him, he immediately went out to do that horrid thing; which as ſoon as he had done, he could

not

not live under the thoughts of having done it; but made himself away in Despair.

A melancholy Contemplation it is, to think what a sad mistake sinners lie under: When they sin, they pretend it is their own humour and pleasure to do so; and under this notion they boast and delight in it, because it seems to be a mark of their Freedom: Whereas all is a mistake: For they are all the while doing the will and pleasure of the Devil; he becomes their Master; and what his wages are, it is a fearful thing to consider.

In a word; view the whole State of a sinful Life together, and how remarkably does the Bondage of it appear. It makes Men act contrary to their own Approbation and Judgment; what they blame and condemn themselves for; and this is pure Bondage: It makes Men act contrary to their own very Will and Inclination; for when they sometimes

times fain would do better, Evil is present with them, and hurries them away; and this is pure Bondage: It makes Men act with fear, and disquiet, and trouble of mind, in prospect of what will follow; and this is fearful Bondage: And lastly, it makes men act such things as call for the wrath of God; and this bodes no less than *Eternal Bondage* to Punishment and Misery.

The heathens themselves were so sensible of this Bondage that sin brings upon Men, that they concluded *none to be free but the wise Man* (meaning by the wise Man, consonantly to the Stile of the Scripture, the good and virtuous Man) *Solus Sapiens Liber*, cried they, none but the wise Man is free. And this they used as the strongest Argument for a virtuous Life; advising Men to govern their Lusts, and subdue their Passions, and act according to right reason, that thereby they might make themselves free, and recover that Liberty to which

all

all naturally aſpire. Indeed their advice was good, but it was ſhort; their Aim was right, but their means were not competent; for bare reaſon cannot overcome luſt, the match is too unequal: Man cannot reform and govern himſelf in his own ſtrength, nor conſequently ſet himſelf free, nor be his own Maſter: The only true Advice is this--Let us ſerve God; and let him be our Maſter; and then, in His ſtrength, all our Enemies will be brought under, and our Freedom aſſerted to its proper State.

But if we will ſerve God, we muſt ſerve him in Sincerity; we muſt not think to divide our hearts between God and our Luſts; for to do ſo is Impracticable, and to think to do ſo is fatally deceiving: Which is my laſt obſervation, and the main Importance of the words --*We cannot ſerve two Maſters.*

Indeed, had we ſeveral Maſters ſubordinate to one another, and commanding

ing things of the ſame kind, we might ſerve them *all*: For *thus*, as God is to be ſerved, ſo Parents, Princes, Magiſtrates, and private Maſters are to be ſerved too, and the Service of each is well conſiſtent: For while Parents command us to be dutiful, Princes to be Obedient, Magiſtrates to be honeſt and peaceable, and Maſters to be faithful and diligent, they command the ſame thing that God does, and both are ſerved in the ſame act. But when contrary things are commanded, obedience to both is abſolutely Impracticable. Now the commands of God, and of our luſts, are always contrary: God commands us to reſign our will, and our luſts command that our will ſhould govern; God commands us to mind heavenly things, and our luſts command us to adhere unto the earthly ---- Now how can obedience to theſe two conſiſt? If one be obſerved, the other muſt neceſſarily be neglected.

I know, our fooliſh hearts may be apt to ſuggeſt an expedient for this, and cry, ---Though I cannot ſerve theſe two Maſters together, yet I may ſerve them both at ſeveral times: For example: Though I am looſe now, I may be Religious anon; though I am unjuſt in the preſent inſtance, I may be Charitable in the next; and ſo one act may compound for another; and both the Maſters look upon themſelves as indifferently obeyed---But let us obſerve, that although God would allow himſelf to be ſo ſerved, *i. e.* to take his turn, and be ſerved in courſe with our luſts; yet our very Affections would not allow it; they would immediately grow partial, and take to a ſide; they *would love the one and hate the other, or hold to the one and deſpiſe the other*; becauſe it is impoſſible for them to have an equal regard to two ſo contrary Maſters. If we take to the ſervice of Worldly things, our affections will naturally follow thither; there

there will be our Love, our Hope, and our Joy; and nothing will be left for God, but the Dread and Averſion of our thoughts: If, on the contrary, we take to the Service of God in Sincerity, our Affections will likewiſe follow thither; and God will become our Love Hope and Joy; and a Dread and Averſion will gradually poſſeſs our Souls, and guard us from offending. But if, in the method of the Lukewarm, we Propoſe to *mix* our Service, and to take turns between the actions that are good, and the actions that are ſinful; We ſhall find that our affections will never follow equally to both theſe. Sinful Actions will neceſſarily take the greateſt hold upon us, becauſe they have the greateſt hold to take; for ſin takes hold both of the Body and Soul, by thoſe gratifications and pleaſures that it adminiſters to them both: Whereas Righteouſneſs takes no hold of the Body; nor can it adminiſter any pleaſure to the Soul it ſelf, longer

ger than it is Sound and Sincere: For every mixture of Sin ſteals away the heart, and neceſſarily abates our Love both of Godlineſs and God himſelf; ſo that in a ſhort time it will come to paſs, that ſin only will be ſerved with Affection, and God with bare Formality.

I confeſs there are ſome that would make one believe, they can ſerve God and their Luſts with equal affection: Men that will ply their Sins zealouſly, and after that, can be as zealous at their Prayers: But theſe Men muſt either be wild Enthuſiaſts, who cry---*God ſees no Iniquity in Jacob*; meaning, with a new Gloſs upon the Text, that God overlooks the Sins of his elect, and lets them paſs for nothing: Or elſe they muſt be Men of ſuch corrupted Brutiſh Conſciences, that they neither diſcern the ſinfulneſs of ſin, nor that Averſion that God bears to it. But we muſt all take it for a warning---that God will not be ſo ſerv'd: He is our rightful Maſter; and as he deſerves

deſerves all our ſervice, ſo he requires it: *All our Mind, all our Heart, all our Strength*---he calls for: No *Maſling*, no *Linſy woolſy*, ſays the Ceremonial Law; that is no mixed partial Hypocritical Service. The life that is Uniform, is that which God accepts of. Nay----if we will obſerve that Denunciation *Rev.* 3. *I wiſh thou wert Cold or Hot; ſo then becauſe Thou art Lukewarm and neither Cold nor Hot; I will Spew thee out of my Mouth*; we muſt inferr from this, that God bears more patience to the Cold than to the Lukewarm, to the Irreligious than to the Indifferent. *Lev.* 19, 19.

And this being a Truth of ſome moment for us to conſider, I ſhall inſiſt a little upon it; and (1) ſhew more determinately, what Lukewarmneſs is; and then give the Reaſon of this Judgment, that God has paſt upon it.

Lukewarmneſs, in the natural Senſe of the word, ſignifies a mixture of Heat and Cold; and in the moral Senſe it

ſignifies a mixture of Manners, and blending of Good and Evil in our Converſation. And this mixture is obſervable ſometimes in Habits, and ſometimes in Acts. *Ex. gr.* Some Men are habitually covetous, and at the ſame time habitually devout; ſome are cuſtomarily intemperate, and likewiſe cuſtomarily charitable; ſome are eminently ſober, and at the ſame time eminently contentious. Now where there is this mixture of Habits, there can be no true Piety; no Grace, no Principle of Sanctification; all the Appearance of Good proceeds only from Temper, or Decency, or Convenience, or ſome other Conſideration external to true Godlineſs. The very Heathens would not allow ſuch a Man to have any Virtue; becauſe they lookt upon Virtue to be a common Principle, bearing equal Regard to all its particular Offices; as we know, Grace (which is the ſupport of Virtue) is a common Principle derived from

from God, that bears equal Regard to all his Commandments.

(2) Sometime this mixture appears only in Acts, *Ex. gr.* Some Men are true in their Words, and juſt in their Dealings, and regular in their Deportment, *for the moſt part*; but then, when a tempting Opportunity preſents it ſelf, they will cloſe with a Lye, with a Fraud, or any other pleaſing or profitable Sin. Now where there is this mixture of Acts, there can be no real Virtue: And therefore it was, that the Heathen Moraliſts called their good Man *Virum Conſtantem*, that is, one who always acted conſiſtently with himſelf; and *Virum Fortem*, i. e. one that is ſtrong to reſiſt Temptations: And indeed the very word Virtue ſignifies the ſtrength of the Soul againſt Temptations: So that he who ſins when *he is tempted*, is abſolutely vitious; he that ſins when he is not tempted, is *more* than vitious; he is profligate and vain-glorious in Vice. In a

word--to be a good and godly Man does certainly require Pains and Watchfulneſs, and Diſcipline; now the Lukewarm is one that will not be at this expence; and therefore takes up and contents himſelf with that good that comes eaſie; and hopes that God will be contented with the ſame. Now this is that Indifference, that God ſo declares againſt; as having no competent Senſe either of his Holineſs, or Power, or Juſtice, and being altogether unworthy of his Goodneſs and Love.

But yet you will ſay--in Lukewarmneſs there are ſome good Acts, ſome good Offices, and ſome Appearance at leaſt of radical Goodneſs; and is not this then a better State than abſolute Coldneſs, where there is no ſuch Appearance? And why then does God profeſs more patience to the Cold, than to the Lukewarm? Undoubtedly there are Reaſons for it: And be pleaſed, in ſhort, to conſider theſe three.

(1) That

(1) That there is more affront to God;

(2) That there is more ſcandal to Religion---and

(3) That there is more hazard to Souls, in lukewarmneſs and indifference, than there is in open Irreligion and Profaneneſs.

(1) There is more affront to God in the State of Lukewarmneſs, than that of open Profaneneſs. Becauſe---the affront to God from the Profane, is like that of an open Enemy; from the Lukewarm, it is like that of a perfidious Friend, which always carries in it the greater provocation: And the greatneſs of the Provocation conſiſts particularly in this---that although the Sins of the profane are more groſs and clamorous, yet the Sins of the Lukewarm carry in them more aggravating Circumſtances: For whereas the profane do only contemn the Authority of God; the Lukewarm,

warm, who pretend to Piety amidſt their ſinful Allowances, do likewiſe draw Reflections upon the Wiſdom and Holineſs of God; as if he were either not wiſe enough to ſee through their Hypocriſie; or elſe not holy enough to hate it.

(2) There grows more ſcandal to Religion from Lukewarmneſs, than from open Profaneneſs. They that are irreligious and profane, are in a deplorable State; but this is one benefit of their State, that they give no ſcandal to Religion: For Religion cannot get ſcandal but from thoſe of its own Party, that is, ſuch as pretend to be religious: For they who pretend to be religious, and yet indulge themſelves in Sin, theſe ſeem to conſpire to make the World believe, that Religion *allows* of ſuch a Deportment, and that Chriſt will admit Communion with *Belial*: And this is the crying Scandal, that makes Religion un-

unworthily thought of by thoſe that are its common Profeſſors, and evil ſpoken of by thoſe that are without.

(3) There grows more hazard to Souls from Lukewarmneſs, than there does from open Profaneneſs. For we have certain Reaſon to believe, that more Souls are undone by Indifferency in Religion, than by looſe and profeſſed Wickedneſs: And that not barely becauſe Indifferency in Religion is the more common Evil; but becauſe it is in ſome Reſpects the more dangerous, and fatal Evil of the two.

Looſe and profeſſed Wickedneſs is undoubtedly at a greater Diſtance from God; but yet it carries in it greater hopes of returning: For a looſe Life is like a gaping Wound; as oft as a Man looks upon it, it frights him, and puts him in mind of his Danger; and this Fear is oftentimes the Occaſion of Repentance: Whereas Indifferency and Lukewarmneſs is like an Ulcer skin'd over;

over; it flatters a Man, and makes him conceive falſe Hopes, that it is well with him, and that he needs no Repentance. When *Saul* had deſtroyed *Amalek* in part, *i. e.* only as far as his Covetouſneſs would give him leave; he interpreted ſo well of himſelf, that he could return to *Samuel* with a *Boaſt*---*Bleſſed art thou of the Lord, I have fulfilled the Commandment of the Lord*: And thus it is that *Parcel*-Obedience, by reaſon of the falſe hopes that it is apt to found in a Man, makes his Condition more deſperate than acknowledged Diſobedience. And theſe are the Reaſons why God has declared ſo ſeverely againſt the Lukewarm-ſtate.

And now I ſhall conclude all with the Advice of an honeſt Heathen---*Learn to be one Man*, i. e. learn to live and act alike: For while we act from contrary Principles; ſometimes give, and ſometimes defraud; ſometimes love, and ſometimes betray; ſometimes are de-

devout, and ſometimes careleſs of God; this is to be *two* Men; which is a fooliſh Aim, and always ends in loſs of pains: No---ſays wiſe *Epictetus*---*Learn to be one Man*: Thou may'ſt be a good Man; or thou may'ſt be a bad Man; and that, to the purpoſe; but it is impoſſible thou ſhouldſt be both. And here the Philoſopher had the happineſs to fall in exactly with the Notion of the Text---*We cannot ſerve two Maſters.*

Let us not therefore loſe our pains, by halting betwixt two Services: If our Luſts are worthy to be our Maſters, let us ſerve them; but if God be worthy, let us ſerve him. And if we ſerve God, let us ſerve him ſo, as becomes the Hope of that Bleſſed Reception---*Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter thou into thy Maſter's Joy* ---- To which God of his Grace and Mercy bring us, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

The Nature and Uſe of Self-Denial.

A

SERMON

ON

St. MATTH. XVI. 24.

Whoſoever will come after me, Let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me.

THE Occaſion of theſe Words we meet with three Verſes before, where 'tis ſaid that--*From that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew unto his Diſciples that he muſt go up to* Jeruſalem, *and ſuffer many things of the Elders, and Chief Prieſts, and Scribes, and--be killed.*

led. Upon the hearing of this, *Peter* who was always particularly zealous for his Maſter's Welfare, preſumes to expoſtulate with him, and (as the Text expreſſes it) to *Rebuke him ſaying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee.* Let us unfold this Argument, and it runs thus: "Lord, thou ſayſt, "that going up to *Jeruſalem*, thou "muſt ſuffer many things, and be "killed; but why then muſt thou "needs go up? If thou foreſeeſt that "the Jews have malice enough to form "ſuch a Deſign againſt thee, why "ſhouldſt thou not rather prevent their "malice? Ἵλεώς σοι κύριε; which (to "render the Phraſe literally, and as it is "generally rendered by the Ancients) it "is, *Propitius eſto tibi, Domine, Lord, fa-*"*vour thy ſelf, or be kind to thy ſelf, Lord,* "and ſuffer not theſe Evils to come up-"on thee. Thus argued *Peter*; being poſſeſt with this natural Sentiment, That whatſoever is grievous to be born, that

in

in all Right and Diſcretion ought to be avoided. But we may obſerve, that while he made this Argument for his Maſters favouring himſelf, he made no proviſional Exception for the Glory of God, nor any Reſerve for thoſe Obligations, that the Cauſe of Righteouſneſs might lay on him to the contrary; and this was the Reaſon why he met with ſo ſevere a Reprehenſion as follows---*Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of Men. Get thee behind me Satan*: We muſt allow that *Peter* had diſcovered too much of the Man in his advice, it ſavoured of Fleſh and Blood: But I do not apprehend that there was much of Satan in it, not much either of that Pride, or Diſſembling, or Malice of Intention, that the Devil is wont to uſe in his Addreſſes: This agrees not with the uſual Character of that Diſciple; and therefore I perſwade my ſelf that our Saviour called

called him Satan for no other Reaſon than this, (*viz.*) that he had imprudently run upon the ſame Advice that Satan uſes the moſt ſucceſsfully of all others to undo Men by, and that is the Advice of Self-Indulgence, Ἵλεώς σοι, *Favour thy ſelf.*

Favour thy ſelf is the moſt artificial of all the Suggeſtions of the Devil; becauſe that being made ſpecious with the Pretences of Reaſon and Juſtice, and ſweetened by its agreeableneſs to that Self-love with which all Men do naturally abound, it ſeldom fails of being ſwallowed, though Poiſon and Death lurk under it.

Now it was expreſly againſt the Deceit of this indulgent Advice, that our Saviour levels the Doctrine of the Text; where he turns his own Caſe into a general one; and as he implies what himſelf *would* do, ſo he declares what all others *muſt* do that will be his Diſciples. *Whoſoever will come after me, let him,* &c.

After that our Saviour had propoſed Heaven for a Reward to his Followers, he needed not his Divine Præſcience to foreſee, that a world of Hypocrites would come into his Train: For whether Men bring their Hearts to his *Service* or not, they cannot with-hold their Affections from his *Wages*; and hence it muſt needs come to paſs, that many would pretend to *come after* him, tho' in the mean while they walkt not in *his*, but in their *own* way; and many would take up his Name, as it were, for a Paſs-port unto Glory, though in the mean while they reſolved to coaſt and avoid all the Roughneſs and Difficulties of the Road.

Theſe indeed are vain Thoughts; but the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *That the Thoughts of Men are but vain*: Vain even in worldly Projects where they deliberate moſt; and therefore no wonder if *more* vain in Religious, where they are ſo much leſs conſiderative.

But

But to give a fair check to all ſuch deluding Thoughts, our Saviour forewarns us here, that if we will *come after him*, that is, in the Place and Profeſſion of Diſciples, we muſt *follow him* with the Hearts and Sincerity of Diſciples; and if we will arrive at that happy Place whither he is gone before, we muſt follow him; not in the By-paths of our own projecting, but ἐν τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ (as St. *Peter* expreſſes it) *in his very ſteps*, and particularly in theſe of Self denial, and taking up our Croſs.

To *deny our ſelves*, and to *take up our Croſs*, are two Expreſſions which each of them import the Chriſtian's Obligation to ſuffer: For as a Man may ſuffer two ways, (*viz.*) either by his own Act, when he inflicts any thing uneaſie upon himſelf; or by another's Act, when any ſuch thing is inflicted on him from without; ſo theſe two Expreſſions have a direct Regard to theſe two-kinds of ſuffering: *Self denial*, which is a Man's

own Act, requires no leſs than that a Man ſhould ſuffer from himſelf by voluntary Inflictions; and *taking up our Croſs*, which is the ſubmitting to anothers Act, (for it was part of the condemned Man's Sentence, to bear his Croſs to the Place of Execution:) This, I ſay, requires a ſubmiſſive and patient bearing of involuntary Evils, or ſuch as God's Providence ordains to come upon us, from other Hands; and both theſe are Eſſential parts of the Chriſtian's Duty; both neceſſary to the Ends of Virtue; and both obliging all thoſe, that will follow our Lord in the way that leadeth unto Life.

It ſhall be my preſent Buſineſs to ſpeak to the former, the Duty of Self-denial.

To deny, in our common Notion of the Word, is to refuſe when askt; and if we will retain that Notion in this place, as we may, to *deny our ſelves*, is to deny our Deſires; when they ask and ſollicit, we

we muſt refuſe and controul them: And this is the plain and the whole of the Duty.

One may poſſibly ſuppoſe, that all our Deſires are not to be ſo treated: For it is to be hoped there are in us ſome Deſires that are truly ſpiritual and pious, and conformable to the Will of God; and we know it is the main Buſineſs of Religion, to nouriſh and improve *ſuch* Deſires: But then we may obſerve likewiſe concerning ſuch Deſires, that they are not properly ours: When they are *in* us, they are not *of* us, nor can they be derived from the Principles of our own Nature, wherein are ſo many rooted Oppoſitions to the Divine Will; but they are derived from the Influences of Grace; and when we reliſh them, and are led by them, and maintain them againſt the Inſults of our inferiour Deſires, it is a Proof that we are advanced to a Pitch above our natural State: All good Deſires are

from God in their Fountain, as well as to him in their Streams: And therefore thoſe notwithſtanding, the Rule ſtill holds that all *our* Deſires have need of this Diſcipline of Denial.

Let us then (in the next place) ſee thoſe Deſires that are properly our own: See them, did I ſay? Alas, what a ſpectacle would they make! Were our Breaſts but for a while that *Sea of Glaſs, clear as Chryſtal* to one another (as St. *John* in his Revelation tells us, they are always unto God;) were our Breaſts ſo laid open for a while, that each could ſee the natural Wouldings and Propenſions of anothers Heart, in the ſame Form that they now commonly ſtand; how ſhould we be glad to run away from our ſelves, and be aſhamed to own our own Appearances? For the Deſires of Man are but of two Kinds; and the firſt are actually Evil, and the ſecond incline to be ſo; that is, they certainly will be Evil, unleſs a careful Diſcipline prevent them. Of

Of thoſe Deſires that are actually Evil ſome become ſo from the unlawfulneſs of their object; which therefore the Apoſtle calls the *Deſires of evil things*, that is of ſuch things as are forbidden and ſinful in their own Nature: Others become evil not from the Nature of their object, but from their own Exceſs; and of ſuch Deſires we may interpret St. *Peter*, 2 *Ep.* 3. 3. where he ſpeaks of *Men walking after their own Deſires.*

Walking--The expreſſion imports Deſires grown ſo ſtrong and Maſterly that the Men cannot govern their Deſires, but the Deſires govern the Men; who are therefore ſaid to *walk after them*, as a Slave walks after his Chain. Now in ſuch an exceſs, the Deſire of any Indifferent thing becomes evil; becauſe it gives up the heart to the thing deſired, and ſo robs God of his proper worſhip.

Concerning theſe Deſires that are thus actually evil, the duty is plain enough; there can be no Controverſie

but that they muſt be denied: Theſe are the Enemies *that warr againſt the Soul*; and not to deny them is to be Confederates to our own undoing. And yet theſe Deſires have the Luck to be dear unto us, and we look upon them as a part of our ſelves: In them when accompliſht, we account our ſelves happy; in them when croſt, we account our ſelves diſappointed; in them when unheard, we account our ſelves affronted; nay we ſometimes look upon them as our moſt intimate ſelf; and they are more dear to us than our very Souls---But it would be worth our while to reflect, that *Pſal.* 81. 13. it is mentioned as the ſevereſt Judgment that God could inflict on the ſtubborn *Iſraelites*, on this ſide Exciſion, that he *gave them up to their own hearts Deſires*: He had cut them ſhort, and diſtreſſed them, and ſorely puniſht them before; but in all this he had a mixture of Mercy, for he intended to reclaim them; but at laſt being in-

incorrigible he gave them up to their own hearts Deſires, in pure Vengeance.

Thus we ſee Men may purſue thoſe things as Gratifications, which yet God cannot permit them to enjoy, but under the notion of a Curſe. Indeed it is wonders of miſchief, that ſin can work in us: It can ſet up ſelf againſt ſelf, and make one part of our Being deſtroy a better with Pleaſure, and with Joy; it can put out our Eyes, and be Welcome; it can waſt our Judgments, and make Stupefaction pleaſe us; as it certainly does, when we account our ſelves happy in thoſe ſinful iſſues, which at the ſame time we cannot but allow to make all Men miſerable.

To deny all Deſires that are in their Conſequences ſo pernicious, as it cannot but be our Duty, ſo it is a Duty well reducible to the Intention of my Text; but yet I think that in ſtrict interpretation it is not directly intended there:

there: For indeed to deny ſuch Deſires is too mild a Term to expreſs the Diſcipline that is due to them: that which the Scripture requires in reſpect of theſe is to *Hate and Crucifie* them, to *cut them* off, and caſt *them* away: Whereas to deny ſignifies properly no more than to reſtrain the effect, not to root out the Principle; and therefore it is not ſo accurately applied to things that are ſimply evil, as to thoſe that are Indifferent.

And Deſires we have of this kind too, that is, ſuch as in themſelves are morally indifferent. Deſires that were in our nature, before ſin was there; and conſequently our Saviour took them upon himſelf with our Nature, though he never partook of any thing that was ſinful: Of this kind are the Deſires of Eaſe or Indolence, of proper Refreſhments and honeſt Pleaſures, and of avoiding thoſe things that are noxious and afflicting: Theſe now are the moſt orderly Requeſts of our nature; and ſuch

ſuch as it ſeems moſt Innocent, Juſt and Rational to enjoy; ſuch as a well-meaning *Peter* might adviſe his Maſter to indulge himſelf in; and yet theſe are they that are to be denied. 'Tis true it is ſeverity to deny them; but the only inference that can be drawn thence is this, That a Chriſtian is a Perſon that lies under the Obligation of being ſevere to himſelf. And this is the ſtrict and genuine Doctrine of the words; and this our Saviour expreſly meant, oppoſing his Advice to *Peter's*, which gave the occaſion----*Lord be kind to thy ſelf*, ſays the Diſciple; no, ſays Chriſt, but rather be hard and ſevere to thy ſelf, if thou wilt Follow me.

This then ſhall be the Point to be inſiſted upon, (*viz.*) That there are voluntary Severities, conſiſting in the ſubmiſſion of our ſelves to many unpleaſing things, though otherwiſe avoidable; and in the Reſtraint of our ſelves from many pleaſing things, though otherwiſe Lawful;

and

and theſe ſeverities are to be engaged in upon their Reſpective occaſions, as abſolutely neceſſary to make a good Chriſtian.

And certainly that Chriſtian is much too Delicate, (as St. *Jerome* calls one upon a like account) I ſay, that Chriſtian is much too Delicate, that would excuſe himſelf from this Diſcipline in the School of Chriſt; ſince we may find, that in every heathen School they required no leſs to make a Philoſopher, that is, (in the ſenſe of their ſober Stile) an honeſt and good Man.

I confeſs it was a grateful Scheme of Doctrine that *Epicurus* preſented to the World, when he pretended to ſatisfie the Aims both of Senſe and Morality together; inviting Men to Virtue, and at the ſame time to Pleaſure; and ſpeciouſly telling them that the Life, that was both Virtuous and Pleaſurable, was purely like the Life of the Gods; and therefore ſuch a Life as every wiſe Man ought

ought to Aim at. This was a grateful Scheme, and the very inſtance of the Compariſon gave it a deceiving colour of Reputation: But in the mean time it was very weakly grounded; and all the other Sects ſhewed themſelves much wiſer Moraliſts, that is, they ſhewed themſelves much better acquainted both with the Corruption of human Nature, and likewiſe with the means of reforming that Corruption; in which two points the whole Pretence of Moral Philoſophy does conſiſt. They all ſaw, that to live pleaſurably, and at the ſame time to live virtuouſly, was ſo much like the Life of the Gods, that it was no way imitable by impotent and fooliſh Men: And therefore they all remonſtrate againſt this new Doctor, as one who by hanging out the Flag of Pleaſure, had covered all that was true, and laid aſide all that was great, in Philoſophy. They all teach (on the contrary) that whoever propoſes to be a vir-

virtuous Man he muſt by no means propoſe his Life to be a Scene of Pleaſure: They teach us that Wiſdom and Felicity have built their Palaces together upon the top of a craggy Rock, whither it is not a little difficult to aſcend. The ſame inſtruction it is that we have from the Symbol of *Pythagoras* his letter: And the ſame we have from *Cebes*'s Commentary upon his emblematical Picture; where he tells us of the θύρα μίκρα, and ὁδὸς δυσάνοδος, Terms expreſly the ſame with our Saviours *Streight Gate*, and *Narrow Way*. They repreſented their *Hercules* as always engaging in Labours, always ſeeking Conflicts, always harſh and ſevere to himſelf; and his Character they ſet before their Scholars, as the common Guide to proficiency in good Living. The School of *Plato* reduced all Morality to two governing Virtues, and they were ἐγκράτεια and καρτέρεια; as the School of *Zeno* did to their ἀνέχεσθαι καὶ ἀπέχεσθαι: Both agree in Senſe; and both

both their words are properly rendered in our Language by *bearing* and *forbearing*. Bearing and Forbearing were their Cardinal virtues; accounted by them as the Hinges and Foundation of all the reſt: And be pleaſed to obſerve that theſe two words do exactly anſwer the ſignification of the two expreſſions in the Text, *Denying our ſelves*, and *taking up our Croſs*.

I Mention not all this with a purpoſe to enforce the Precepts of our Lord from the authority of Philoſophers; I mention it to hinder leſt any ones Indulgence ſhould perſwade him that he can poſſibly be a good Chriſtian without the Offices of *Self-Denial*; when it appears that the Heathens did not think it poſſible that any one could be a commonly good Man without them. I mention it to convince us that our Lord, who has *opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers*, ought not by any means to be accounted a hard Maſter, when he

he impoſes no other Terms than the Heathens thought fit to engage in upon the meer Spur of their private Conſciences and publick Shame. I mention it likewiſe to ſtick upon us for an admonition, how ſpeechleſs and without Apology a great part of the Chriſtian World muſt needs ſtand in the day of Inquiry; when it ſhall appear that *Pythagoras*, and *Plato*, and *Zeno* could have Diſciples run through ſuch a Diſcipline as neceſſary to virtue, when many that profeſs Chriſt eſteem that Diſcipline needleſs, only becauſe it is unpleaſing.

And now I ſhall proceed to ſhew farther the neceſſity of this Diſcipline by Arguments drawn from the Nature of our Religion.

1. The firſt ſtep of the Chriſtian life (or rather the firſt ſtep towards it) is to *forſake ſin*: The ſecond is to *prevent ſin*, and to guard our ſelves againſt it. The third and finiſhing ſtep is to *qualifie our ſelves with thoſe Holy affections, that are pre-*

preparative to future Glory: Now our Religion inſtructs us, that neither of theſe Offices can be done without being ſevere to our ſelves.

1. *There is no forſaking Sin without it.* I know a Man may poſſibly forſake a Sin, as a ſurfeited Stomach forſakes its Meat; but then as in this caſe there is nothing of Temperance; ſo in the other there is nothing of Repentance. For the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. makes the chief Office of Repentance to conſiſt in Revenge: So that a Man cannot be ſaid to repent in the ſenſe of the Scripture, without bringing himſelf under Severities, and executing Acts of Diſpleaſure upon himſelf; ſuch as are Mourning and Abſtinence, and Vigilance, and Reſtraint of Delights, and Labour in the Works of Charity, and whatſoever elſe may conduce to the humbling of our Nature, and taking Revenge upon thoſe Paſſions whereby we have offended God. It was to inculcate the Neceſſity of theſe

Acts, that the Ancients were wont to ſtile them by the Name of Satisfactions; not meaning (as the Byaſs of latter Ages would have them interpreted) that they are of value to ſatisfie the Divine Juſtice (nothing but the Blood of Jeſus can do ſo) but meaning that they ſatisfie thoſe Conditions which the Goſpel requires of Penitents, as neceſſary both for their preſent Correction and future Caution. But this is a Matter, that however it be corrupted in Practice, yet it is not much conteſtable in Judgment; and therefore I ſhall paſs from it to the ſecond Uſe of voluntary Severities, and that is, to prevent Sin.

2. 2. It is in reſpect of this Office, that the Chriſtian State is called a Warfare, that is the neceſſary and continual Engagement of our Rational Deſires againſt our Senſual, in order to bring them under, and keep them in obedience. And this is a Warfare from whence there muſt be no Diſmiſſion; there muſt be no League, no

no Truce, no laying down of Arms in it; for our Enemies are perfidious, and will never keep the Peace, and therefore we are never out of danger, but while we are actually fighting. We find St. *Paul*, a Man of Miracles and Viſions; and a Sanctity of Life more glorious than either; even while he was daily fought againſt from without by the Malice of Satan and Evil Men, yet as if this were not Mortification enough, we find him moreover *fighting* againſt himſelf, *caſting down* his mind (as he calls it) and *beating down his Body*, and bodily Affections. Now can we incline to think that St. *Paul* did this, either from the Affectation of Singularity, or from a Principle of Vain-glory, or from a Pretence to Super-erogation, or by a ſimple Miſtake of Judgment? No, he tells us himſelf, that he did it for no leſs Reaſon than this, (*viz.*) leſt for want of this Diſcipline, he *might poſſibly be a Caſt-away*: And if he were fain to maintain —

this Fight for fear of being a Caſt-away, who among Chriſtians can lay down his Arms and be ſafe?

This fighting with our Appetites and Deſires, is the ſame thing with *denying our ſelves*, in the Text: And the Practice of it conſiſts in reſtraining them, and not giving them leave to ſatiate themſelves on their particular Objects: For he that gives his Appetites their looſe or their fill, I mean even of thoſe Enjoyments that are otherwiſe lawful; he ceaſes to fight with them or to deny them, and from that Moment brings himſelf in danger of being worſted by them. And this is a Truth, that the Heathen Sages inſinuated in the Paſſage of their *Hercules* fighting with *Antæus*: Whilſt *Hercules* graſp'd his Adverſary, and held him up in his Arms, he could manage and maſter him with eaſe; but no ſooner did he let *Antæus* come to touch the Earth, but he got ſtrength again, and was able to renew the Combat: *Antæus*

us touching the Earth is morally no other than an Earthly Affection permitted to its Element, that is, ſuffered to have its fill; at which time it always gets ſtrength and grows maſterly, and becomes leſs manageable than before. Grapple with thy Deſires, hold them off from the reach of their Quarry, and reſtrain them even from the lawful Meaſures of Enjoyment: For ſo they will grow weak, and thy Government firm over them: But if thou permit them to the utmoſt of what is lawful, thou art certainly a baffled Man; for, beſides that the preciſe Limits of lawful and unlawful are very often undiſtinguiſhable, thy Appetites will grow ſo ſtrong by what thou doſt allow them, that they will take the reſt in ſpite of thy Approbation.

3. It is neceſſary to be ſtrict and ſevere upon our ſelves in order to gain thoſe Holy Affections that are preparative to future Glory.

The Apoſtle tells us, Col. 1. 12. that there is an Ἱκανότης, a certain *Meetneſs* or Fitneſs, which is required to be in all thoſe that ſhall be *Partakers of the Inheritance with the Saints in Light.* They that hope rationally to have that glorious Change paſs upon them, muſt make advances towards it by habiting their Minds with heavenly Sentiments, and heavenly Deſires, and a proper Hunger and Reliſh of thoſe Enjoyments that are in Heaven; which are much different from thoſe wherewith our Appetites are naturally affected: But the Queſtion is how this ſhall be done, and how ſuch perfective Diſpoſitions ſhall be brought into the Soul.

We are told concerning our Saviour Chriſt himſelf, that *he was made perfect through ſufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through ſufferings*: The words

words indeed do not abſolutely imply that thoſe Sufferings were neceſſary for the *perſonal* Perfection of our Saviour; he might have paſs'd to Glory an eaſier way, becauſe he wanted no Virtue to accompliſh and qualifie him for that State; but the words imply that his Sufferings were neceſſary for his *exemplary* Perfection; that is, as he was to be an Example to us, and the Captain and Preſident of our Salvation; as he was to lead the way by which *many* adopted *Sons* of God might likewiſe paſs into Glory, ſo it was neceſſary he *ſhould be made perfect through ſufferings*; becauſe no adopted Son, no Chriſtian, can ever be perfected without thoſe Means. Accordingly Sufferings are mentioned in the Chriſtian Covenant, as an expreſs Condition of future Glory---*If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him*, and---*We are Heirs with Chriſt, if ſo be we ſuffer with him*: As we likewiſe find the ſame Apoſtle teaching his Converts at

Antioch, to believe it as a part of their Chriſtian Faith --- that *we muſt through much Tribulation* (the word is διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων, through many Wreſtlings and Contendings) *enter into the Kingdom of God.* Now if the Spirit of God gives us warning, that Sufferings are of ſo neceſſary Importance to our future Welfare, and yet at the ſame time does not lay upon us any outward Neceſſity to ſuffer; 'tis a Proof that in this Caſe the Neceſſity lies upon our ſelves to take care that we ſuffer from our own voluntary Diſcipline. For I do not think any one will argue, that Sufferings take any of their Virtue from being involuntary; or that when our Saviour ſays, *Bleſſed are ye that hunger*, and *Bleſſed are ye that mourn*, he means it only of thoſe that hunger and mourn, becauſe they cannot help it; or that thoſe Reſtraints which a Man impoſes upon himſelf, will not conduce as much to the perfecting of his Nature, and the making him

him humble, and ſober, as thoſe that are forc'd upon him by outward Violence: To argue this would be againſt all the Rules of moral Reaſoning. No certainly---there is an inward Diſcipline, which is altogether as *perfective*, nay much more, than any outward Perſecution? There is a Mortification, and continual watching over our ſelves, (which the Father calls *Juge Martyrium*, the daily Martyrdom) as acceptable to God, as is the ſhedding of our Blood: And who can doubt but that St. *Paul*, when from a thorough Experiment made of his own Patience and Reſignation, he could ſay, *I am crucified with Chriſt*, was as glorious a Chriſtian, as when he held forth his Neck to the Sword at his Execution.

When all this is ſaid we muſt obſerve, that 'tis not the Sufferings themſelves, but the Effect of them that makes the Chriſtian, and therefore Sufferings are good no longer, than they produce good,

good, that is, more gracious Diſpoſitions in the Soul that bears them. And this is to be laid down for a Rule, whereby every Man ought to govern himſelf in all the Offices of Self-denial: For by obſerving this, he may prevent himſelf from Pride and Vanity, and Confidence, in the outward Work, and all other Conſequences whereby thoſe Offices may otherwiſe either become unprofitable, or degenerate into Ill.

But then, foraſmuch as a Man may (on the other ſide) elude the Obligation of theſe Offices, by alledging, that he does not find what good they are like to do him; fanſying himſelf in a Poſſibility of being as good a Chriſtian *without* them---I ſhall ſhew (in the laſt place) the Neceſſity of this Diſcipline from the Relation it bears to ſome particular Duties.

The Duties I ſhall chooſe to inſtance in are theſe;

Humility, Compaſſion, and Devotion: Hu-

Humility is the right Poſture of our Souls towards themſelves; Compaſſion is the right Poſture of our Souls towards others; and Devotion is the right Poſture of our Souls towards God; ſo that theſe three ſeem to make up the abſolute Perfection of the Chriſtian State; and yet I think it as poſſible for a Man to be a good Chriſtian without theſe Diſpoſitions, as it is to obtain theſe Diſpoſitions without voluntary Severities.

1. Humility is little elſe than the true Knowledge of our ſelves; how corrupt, how impotent, how vain we are; how we depend abſolutely upon God's Pleaſure every moment, and yet every moment merit his Diſpleaſure, at leaſt till ſuch time as we are truly humble. Now though every man may Speculate and Diſcourſe upon this notion of himſelf; yet no man can *know* it, (in the Scripture ſenſe of knowing) that is, feel it intimately, and be properly affected with it, till ſuch time as he takes himſelf into diſci-

diſcipline. For when a Man is pinched, or reſtrained, or languiſhing; when he is in pain, or in a ſet conflict with any Paſſion, and therewithall reflects, how every little thing is able to make him miſerable; then he proves and learns effectually, how little a thing himſelf muſt needs be; and till then he never conceives a notion of himſelf mean enough to ſize his own unworthineſs. But farther, while a Man holds himſelf under Diſcipline, there naturally follows another gracious effect, and that is this; The leſs he enjoys, the leſs he thinks himſelf to deſerve; which is the perfection of humility: Whereas (on the other ſide) the more a Man allows himſelf of the pleaſurable things of this Life, the more he thinks he deſerves; or at leaſt (to ſpeak the moſt candidly the caſe can bear) the more he allows himſelf of the pleaſurable things of this Life, the leſs he thinks of his *not-deſerving* them; and the leſs he thinks of his not deſerving them

them the more he allows himſelf: And ſo Pride and Indulgence do mutually nurſe each other.

2. I come to the Inſtance of Compaſſion. Compaſſion is the enlarging of our Spirits to a tender concern for the Calamities and Sufferings of others. But for as much as ſenſe is our common Schoolmaſter, and we have but weak notices of thoſe things we do not feel, and thoſe notices we have do quickly paſs away; it cannot be that we ſhou'd e'er maintain a proper Compaſſion for what others either *do*, or *may*, ſuffer, unleſs we in ſome meaſure, or reſemblance, ſuffer the ſame our ſelves: Our ſenſe muſt be both our Inſtructor and Remembrancer of the duty. And ſo we find, that even our Saviour himſelf went to this School of Experience; for *he learnt by ſuffering*, ſays the Apoſtle; and the thing he learnt was Compaſſion: For *therefore he* is *a Merciful high Prieſt*; therefore *he is touched with our Infirmities*; and therefore he is ready

ready to *Succour us when tempted*; becauſe he was made obnoxious unto both, *even like unto us.* As that Apoſtle argues, *Chap.* 2. of his *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews.* On the other hand, the Prophet denounceth a *Wo to them that are at eaſe*; and the reaſon he gives for it is, becauſe *they are not grieved at the Afflictions of Joſeph*; wanting nothing themſelves they are never duly ſenſible of what others want, or endure. And from this ſame Root Springs the Reaſon of that Political obſervation, (*viz.*) that Luxury has always been ſo fatal to States and Kingdoms; the Reaſon is chiefly this---Becauſe that when Men come to Indulge themſelves, they ſet up ſelf for the *Idol*; and this inſenſibly ſhrinks away the publick Spirit, and extinguiſhes all Juſt concern for the common Good.

3. I come to the laſt Inſtance which is that of Devotion. Devotion is the lifting up our Soul unto God, which never

never riſes ſo kindly, as when it reſtrains, and weans it ſelf from ſenſual Enjoyments; for they bring a ~~clear~~ contrary Byaſs and Propenſion upon the mind. *In his Vita Spiritûs*, Says good *Hezekiah*, ſpeaking of Religious Mortification and Mourning, *the Spirit of Man lives in theſe things*: It lives and aſſerts it ſelf by them; and gets Freedom from the Body, command over the Affections, and Ardour in Deſires; and Power with God. Never came a truth more Chriſtian-like out of the Mouth of a Heathen, than that of *Horace*:

Quanto quiſque ſibi plura negaverit,
A Diis plura feret :

The more a Man denies himſelf, the more prevalent he ſhall be with God. Where we have the very Duty in the very Expreſſion of the Text, and recommended to us upon this conſideration, That it will procure us the divine Favour and Bounty. But

But I am aware, that while I ſay, the Chriſtian ſtands obliged to deny himſelf, for the ends of Virtue and Devotion; others may poſſibly ſay, that they do not deny themſelves, and that for the very ſame ends; (*viz.*) becauſe they find that they are never ſo towardly diſpoſed to the Offices of Virtue and Devotion, as when they are in Gayety of Spirit, and Nature in them is entirely at eaſe---Now were it thus, yet it were well to conſider, what a miſerable Piety that is, that depends upon a good Humour; and What muſt become of that Humour in the Day of Viſitation; and how we ſhall be able to maintain it under the Circumſtances of Affliction, Sickneſs, Agonies, or any other forced reſtraints or whether thoſe are circumſtances that muſt be provided for only juſt when they come to Seize us. Indeed a good Humour is a Gay Promiſer, but always Deceitful in Performance; it is, like *Ephraim, glorying in harneſs and Bow,* but

but *Turning back in the day of Battle*: And tho' it may ſeem to make us more prompt in the Diſcharge of ſome Offices; it makes us equally more preſumptuous in the neglect of others. Nay, we may farther obſerve, that when it is the Height of our Animal Spirits that founds a good Humour, the ſame Spirits do at the ſame time produce a good Opinion, and make us apt to take up ſuch a ſanguine Conceit of our ſelves, as a caſtigated and ſober Judgment can by no means maintain or allow. The Conſequences of which Miſtake cannot be otherwiſe, than extremely dangerous. Whoever therefore will ſecure either his Virtue, or Devotion, he muſt try what they will bear, and confirm 'em by bearing; and he muſt ply his Diſcipline till ſuch time as Piety comes (not to wait upon, but) to command his good Humour; without which it is impoſſible that it can ever have any firmneſs of Root. If we will be *perfect*

and entire, ſays St. *James*, (nor does he mean any ſuper-erogating Perfection, but only that Soundneſs that is neceſſary to make every Chriſtian accepted) if we will be *perfect and entire*, we muſt *let Patience have her perfect Work*. And, in the mean time, we may aſſure our ſelves, that the moſt jejune Breathings of an humble Spirit, are a more acceptable Sacrifice than all the forward Conceptions, and promiſing Overtures of a Fancy kept pregnant by the warmth of Indulgence.

I have thus far ſhewn the general Nature and Neceſſity of Self-denial: As for its particular Meaſures, becauſe they are variable according to particular Circumſtances, I muſt leave it to private Diſcretion to determine them: Only with this Caution ---- μη ἁλεσὼς σοι ---- Favour not thy ſelf, be juſt and impartial in thy Cenſures---To avoid Partiality in our tranſacting with others, it is a ſafe Rule to ſuppoſe other Men to be our

our ſelves; and it may be indifferently ſafe in tranſacting with our ſelves, to ſuppoſe our ſelves to be other Men. Let every one therefore diveſt himſelf as much as poſſible of all ſelfiſh Fondneſs; and determine, and do that, which his Conſcience tells him, this Precept of Self-denial obliges another Man to do.

Now to the Immortal, Inviſible, and Only Wiſe, &c.

The Road to Honour.

A

SERMON

ON

1 SAM. II. 30.

Them that honour me, I will honour.

IT has been the Fate of many excellent things to fall into Diſcredit, by reaſon of their occaſional Abuſe: And this Iſſue is very remarkable in two of our common Paſſions, I mean *Self-love*, and *the Deſire of Honour*. *Self-love* is a Name that lies under a general Scandal; inſomuch that it amounts to a hateful Character; and the Man that is ſaid to love *himſelf*, is implied to be good

good to no body elſe. Whereas this Scandal has riſen barely from the Folly of ſuch, who in loving themſelves have *miſtaken* themſelves, and forgot that their Soul was their principal Part: For let us but rectifie this Miſtake; let us place our Love upon our *Soul*, which is properly our *ſelves*; and we ſhall find that *Self-love* is a commendable and uſeful Paſſion, and ſerviceable to all the Ends of Virtue and Religion.

In like manner---*The Deſire of Honour* lies under a general Scandal: It is ſtiled Ambition, and Ambition lookt upon as the common Name of a Vice: It is lookt upon as a pure *Weed*, that ſprings from the Pride of our corrupt Nature; whereas (in truth) the Deſire of Honour is a Noble *Plant*, planted in innocent Nature by God himſelf: For Man being created in an improveable State, and being deſigned for the Acceſſion of Eternal Honour, God planted the Deſire of Honour in his Soul, on purpoſe

to be a Spur to the things that are excellent; to incite and quicken him to thoſe Acts of Virtue, and holy Diſpoſitions, which are neceſſary to qualifie him for that Eternal State. In the mean time the Scandal of this Paſſion has only grown from the Misbehaviour of thoſe who miſtake its proper Object, *Thoſe who ſeek Honour one from another, and not that Honour that cometh from God:* For let us but rectifie this Miſtake, and bring the right Object to the Paſſion, and we ſhall find it to be the greateſt Friend and Aſſiſtant to Piety. And therefore, notwithſtanding, it lies under ſuch a common Diſcredit to be a *ſeeker of Honour*; yet we find that St. *Paul*, (*Rom.* 2. 7.) gives this very Character to all wiſe Chriſtians---that they are οἱ ζητοῦντες δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν, *ſuch as ſeek Glory and Honour*: And accordingly God himſelf has pointed out the happy Influence of this Paſſion, in the words of my Text; where he makes uſe of it as

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the great Motive whereby to draw Men to their Duty---while he ſays---*Them that honour me, I will honour.*

Without any reference to the Perſons, or Circumſtances, that gave particular occaſion to theſe words, I ſhall treat of them abſtractedly, as theyare a Declaration of God wherein we have all an equal Concern. And,

1. I ſhall comment upon them in theſe two Enquiries---*What it is to honour God?* and *what to be honoured by him?* and then I ſhall apply them in this Inference, *That it is a wiſe Ambition to ſeek that Honour that cometh from God.*

I begin with my firſt Enquiry---*What it is to honour God?* And wherein ſhall I ſay that the Honour of God conſiſts? Shall I ſay---*In Virtue?* Or, ſhall I ſay---*In Religion?* *Either* of theſe were *true*: And yet according to ſome Men's Notions, either of them may be *falſe*: And therefore before I proceed any farther, I ſhall premiſe this Obſervation --- That

the Honour of God has ſuffered by nothing ſo much as by Men's making a Difference betwixt Virtue and Religion. For by reaſon of this Diſtinction it has come to paſs, that ſome have had the Credit to be thought vertuous, though in the mean time they were careleſs of God: And others have had the Vanity to think of themſelves that they honoured God, though in the mean time they were careleſs of Virtue: Both which are extreme Miſtakes; and therefore I ſhall lay this for a Foundation---That Virtue and Religion are eſſentially the ſame; and that they are never ſeparate in the Subject; inſomuch, that where the one is wanting, the other can be but vainly pretended to.

Whereas therefore, (1.) ſome may pretend to be virtuous without Religion, I affirm of ſuch, that they have no Virtue.

And the reaſon is this---becauſe Virtue conſiſts not in bare acts and habits, but

but in a *governing principle*, from whence ſuch acts and habits muſt proceed. Virtue is the product and operation of *prudence*, whereby a Man directs all his actions to proper and ſimilar ends: And therefore although we cannot but allow that many actions of Brutes carry in them all the *reſemblances* of Virtue, yet we do not allow thoſe Brutes to have Virtue *it ſelf*, becauſe they have not this *conducting principle*: Now who can doubt but that *prudence* obliges a Man to be Religious as well as Virtuous? Who can doubt but that *prudence* obliges a Man to acquit himſelf in his Offices to God, as well as to the World? Nay who can doubt but that *prudence* obliges a Man to direct all his Virtuous actions to the ends of Religion, that is, to the Honour of God? Becauſe that if there were no God, neither were there any *prudence* in being *Virtuous*. For whatſoever may be argued for the practice of Virtue and for the ſupport of it

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in the World upon a political account; as either from its private conveniencies to particular perſons, or from its publick uſefulneſs to the ends of Government, ſet aſide Religion, and all are but words without weight: The Apoſtle himſelf allows that---- *Let us eat and Drink*, were a juſter concluſion; ſo that if there be no Honour due unto God, Virtue is but a ſerious folly; and it were wiſer to be looſe than to be reſtrained. Since therefore it is impoſſible but that the ſame Prudence which obliges a Man to the Offices of Vertue ſhould equally oblige him to the Offices of Religion; it is likewiſe impoſſible for a Man to be Virtuous in any proportion farther than he is Religious too, ſo that whoſoever ſhall make light of God and Religion; and yet pleaſe himſelf in the mean time that he is either Temperate, or Chaſt or Juſt, or Liberal or Grateful; ſuch a Man for all this has no more Virtue to boaſt of than the

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Beaſts of the Field: It were happy for him if he had no more ſin to anſwer for than they, but that cannot be, becauſe the Beaſts want prudence by *nature*, but he wants it only by *choice*.

2. As for thoſe who pretend to be Religious, and yet in the mean time are careleſs of Virtue, (of which kind we may meet with greater numbers than of the former) of ſuch I affirm that they have no Religion. There are too many that fanſie themſelves Religious, becauſe they have been conſecrated to God by a Solemn Office; becauſe they can boaſt of a pure Faith; becauſe they can argue againſt corruptions, and ſuperſtitions; becauſe they aſſert the Sabbath, and the Sanctuary, and at their leiſure attend the Ritual Offices of Religion; although in the mean time they neglect the Moral; the renewing of the Mind and the Diſcipline of the Affections; and live as looſe as would give Offence to an in-

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different Infidel. Now that ſuch Men have no Religion is apparent from this ---That where-ever Religion is, it is accepted of God, be it but weak and infirm, ſo long as it is founded in Tenderneſs, and Humility of Spirit (as all Religion muſt be founded) God never rejects it,--*not the ſmoaking Flax, not the bruiſed Reed*: But on the contrary when Men found the opinion of their being Religious in outward Formalities, without the ſerious Reformation of Manners, God rejects ſuch Worſhipers with Scorn, and diſclaims all the Honour they pretend to do him. Of ſuch it is ſaid---*Who hath required this at your hands that you ſhould tread my Courts?* What *haſt thou to do to take my Covenant in thy Mouth?* Of ſuch it is ſaid---That *their Oblations are Vain*, their *Sabbaths a trouble*, their *Prayers an Offence*, and their *ſolemn Meetings an Iniquity*. For although the Honour of God does eminently conſiſt in Religious Aſſemblies, yet they who

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are vitious are allowed no other Stile than the *Spots* of thoſe Aſſemblies, and ſuch as by their Preſence do blemiſh the Honour of the Worſhip. *Offer it now to thy Governour*, (ſays the Prophet) *and will he accept it?* Will he be content that after thou haſt made him thy Reverence, *thou ſhouldſt make a wide Mouth, and put out the finger?* For no leſs is the Mockery and Affront to God, when Men pretend to do him Honour in the Intervals of a looſe, and unexamined Life. The Holy Scripture tells us expreſly that Religion is the *preſenting of our Bodies a living Sacrifice unto God*, which denotes the whole practice of Virtue: That Religion is *to keep our ſelves unſpotted from the World*; which denotes the whole Diſcipline of Virtue: and that Religion is *Righteouſneſs*; which is a word that the ſacred Stile uſes in the ſame latitude, that our common Stile does Virtue, that is, to ſignifie the whole Chain of Moral Duties, and the diſ-

Jude, 12.

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charge of all our obligations to God and Man. And now (to come to the determination of my Enquiry) in *this* it is that the Honour of God consists: For so says our Saviour expressly, *herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit*; not *Profession* and *shew*, *this* is only *Leaves*; but the *Fruit* of a Virtuous and holy Conversation.

And now let us see in what manner such a Conversation affects the Honour of God. God that made us, desires likewise that he may govern us; but he has left it to our Liberty whether he shall do so or no; and in the determination of this our Liberty consists the point either of honouring or dishonouring him. *The Lord is King* (says the Psalmist,) and that is his Honour, *but the People are impatient*; we are Impatient of his Yoak, and had rather our own Lusts and Humours should govern us, then *he*; and this is the source of all his dishonour. A good Life is God's Honour, because it acknowledges

ges his Sovereignty, and ſets up his Kingdom within us: Whereas ſin is the denial of his Right, the contempt of his will, the affront of his Majeſty, and an implicit declaration that he who made us, and keeps us, and provides an eternity for us, ſhall (notwithſtanding all this) *not reign over us.*

But the Honour of God is yet farther concerned in our Manners, upon another Conſideration; and that is *this*--- The Holy Scripture frequently puts us in mind---That the Devil affects a Kingdom amongſt Men; a Kingdom founded and propagated by ſin: And God for the ends of his Wiſdom (that Mens Virtue may be exerciſed, and that they who are faithful may be approved) permits it to be ſo; he ſuffers the Devil to try his intereſt among us: Indeed he warns us ſufficiently of the peril of our Seduction; and ſo mercifully reſtrains the malice of the Wicked Spirit that he cannot *force* any of us to his party; he binds

binds the ſtrong one to ſuch a meaſure of Debility, and ſo tempers his Aſſaults, that if we will reſiſt them ſtedfaſtly, we ſhall certainly overcome them: But, after all, he ſuffers him to tempt us; and at the Peril of our fooliſh Choice to advance his Kingdom upon us. And hence it follows, that as Goodneſs is the Honour of God, ſo Sin is the Expreſs Honour of the Devil. And accordingly we may obſerve, that as God vouchſafes to glory in the Virtue of good Men---*Haſt thou conſidered my Servant* Job, *a perfect and upright Man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth evil?* So the Devil pleaſes himſelf as much in the preſumption of their falling---*Doth* Job *ſerve God for nought? But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy Face.* Thus, I ſay, he pleaſes himſelf with the bare *preſumption* of their falling; but their *actual Fall* is an abſolute Triumph to him. And from hence it is that Sin draws

draws a great aggravation; for that it is not only a Contumacy againſt God, but it is Perfidiouſneſs too; it is paſſing over to the Enemy, *and giving his Glory to another.* Inſomuch that any one of the Chriſtian Profeſſion does the Devil as acceptable a Worſhip by his Vices, as the Heathens did by their Temples and Sacrifices: Among the Heathens indeed the Devil carried the whole Service; but yet a ſhare among Chriſtians is a greater Triumph to him; becauſe what he carries among Chriſtians, he carries againſt the expreſs Competition of God; and this is the great Deſpite unto the *Spirit of Grace*, that the *Evil one is preferred* before him.

On the other ſide we have juſt Reaſon from this Paſſage to venerate the great Indulgence of God in his Interpretation of humane Actions, ſince (we ſee) he is pleaſed to interpret what we do well, as an Honour to himſelf. Among *Men*, they that are moſt covetous of Honour,

do yet neglect the Honour of *ſome*, as not worthy their Account. We neglect the Honour of the Contemptible, as having none to give; we neglect the Honour of the Fooliſh, as not diſcerning what is to be given; we neglect the Honour of the Miſerable, as being only the Iſſue of their Fears; we neglect the Honour of the Dependent, becauſe it is not diſtinguiſhable from their Hopes; we neglect the Honour of the Obliged, becauſe it is covered with the Notion of their Duty; and yet all theſe, whoſe Honour we neglect, are of our own Kind, and ſuch as we may ſometimes need, or be beholding to; nay, we are actually beholding to them in this .... That although we neglect their Honour, yet at the ſame time their Diſreſpect would certainly make us uneaſie: Whereas in Reſpect of God, how inferiour, how contemptible, how fooliſh, how miſerable, how dependent, how obliged, how unprofitable are *we*? And yet

yet he vouchſafes to interpret our Services an Honour to him; and *ſuch* an Honour as he will compenſate with his *own*: *Them that honour me, I will honour.*

I proceed to my ſecond Enquiry--*What it is to be honoured by God?* And this I ſhall determine by obſerving, that there are *three ſorts* of Honour, that God confers upon thoſe that honour him, *i. e.* upon good Men---The firſt is---*The Honour of their inward State*---The (2) *The Honour of their outward Providences*--The (3) *The Honour of their future Reward.*

The firſt Honour that God gives unto good Men, is *the Honour that he has made connatural to Goodneſs it ſelf.* For a good Mind is the moſt honourable of all Atchievements; and the Relation it gives to God the moſt honourable of all Relations; and Virtue is that which of all poſſible Qualifications gives a Man the juſteſt Title to an Univerſal Reſpect. How beautiful is the Character of Vir-

tue? And how ſweet is the Odour of its Memory? Inſomuch that even the Enemies of Virtue cannot ſee or hear it, without ſecretly preferring it, and inwardly ſighing for it, and wiſhing at leaſt that it were their own: Indeed as for publick and avowed Honour, we muſt confeſs that it is due to a Virtue not always paid: For good Men are very often deſpiſed, and contemned in the World: But ſo is God himſelf by ſuch as are ſinful: (And this is intimated in the words immediately following my Text, where God ſays, *They that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly regarded*:) But it is not without Honour both to God and Virtue, that Men deſpiſe both againſt their Conſciences, and are inwardly checkt and condemn'd for doing it; and as the lewdeſt Man dare not pronounce deliberately, that God is to be deſpiſed, ſo neither dare he pronounce ſo of *Virtue*; which is the moſt expreſs Image and Reſemblance of God.

And

And therefore we may obſerve, that good Men are never overtly deſpiſed, but that they are firſt calumniated; and Men firſt rob them of their Virtue, in order to rob them of their Honour. They that would not honour St. *John Baptiſt*, firſt repreſented him as a *Hypochondriack*; and they that would not honour our Saviour, firſt repreſented him as *a Glutton, and a Wine bibber*: And in like manner, when-ever due Reſpect is withdrawn from any virtuous Perſon, his Virtue is firſt attackt and diſparaged; and ſo Men hope to juſtifie their Diſreſpect by their Detraction: Proving it in the mean time to be a ruling Dictate of their Conſciences---that Honour is due to Virtue, however envious Prejudices make them with-hold it from the virtuous Perſon. Were there farther need to convince any of the Honourableneſs of being good, I ſhould add this one Conſideration: It is very remarkable that in that Sacred Hymn, which the

Bleſſed above ſing eternally to the Praiſe of God (as it is recorded both in the Old and New Teſtament) they give him no other ſtile than that of *Holy! Holy! Holy!* There is no mention made of his boundleſs Wiſdom, or of his irreſiſtible Power (which vain Men would be apt to look upon as the matter of a nobler Praiſe) but *Holy*.....is inſtead of all that can be ſaid: which certainly implies (give me leave to ſpeak of Infinite things unaccurately, and after the manner of Finite) it implies, I ſay, that God eſteems himſelf more glorious in his Holineſs, than in any other of his Infinite Perfections. And this may ſerve for a Demonſtration, that Holineſs is the moſt honourable thing in the World; for it is the moſt honourable thing in Heaven it ſelf.

The ſecond Honour that God confers on good Men is the Care of his Providence over them, in reference to their Temporal Affairs. *For Godlineſs has*

has the Promiſes of this Life, as well as the next. And if we have a Good and Wiſe God to govern the Iſſues of things, how can we ſuppoſe but that his Providence ſhould act on its own ſide, *i. e.* on the behalf of thoſe who ſtudy the Honour of his Providence? And this Care of God's Providence is ſufficiently conſpicuous in delivering good Men out of Difficulties, and bringing them to Honour, and advancing their Fortunes, and ſucceeding their Undertakings, and eſtabliſhing their Families. And this is the Courſe of God's *general* Providence, in order to the common Encouragement of Virtue, and the more orderly Government of the World: But foraſmuch as this World, is not the Place of Reward, and thoſe Providences are certainly beſt that tend moſt to our Sanctification; therefore before we cenſure the Lot of any particular Perſon, we muſt lay down this for a Rule, that the Care of God's Providence over good Men, conſiſts not

ſo much in the providing them the Iſſues of outward Proſperity, as in ordering all Iſſues for their good; and in continually watching over them, and in accompanying them in every Condition. For thus ſays God concerning the good Man, *I am with him in trouble*; and if it be ſo, if God be with good Men in trouble, their Trouble is as honourable as their Relief. As if a Perſon of great Quality, and Fortune ſhould breed up his Son to hard Exerciſes, and toilſome Travels, and ſpare Accommodations; but in the mean time (leaſt he ſhould be either drawn away or diſcouraged) ſhould accompany him in the whole Courſe of his Diſcipline; who would queſtion but ſuch a Son were as much honoured by his Father's Care, as he could be by the largeſt Aſſignment of his Fortunes? I muſt confeſs, that when we ſee a *Lazarus*, as repreſented in the Parable (and therein but a common Repreſentative of many pious Chriſtians; I ſay, when we

ſee

ſee a *Lazarus* poor, and deſtitute, and comfortleſs, full of Pains, and of Sores, and in that Condition pitied more by Beaſts than Men, our common Notions will hardly diſpoſe us to judge ſuch a one to be a Perſon of Honour; but let us ſuſpend our Judgment for a while, while we contemplate his pious Soul attended by Angels into *Abraham*'s Boſome, and then ſay, who would not adjudge ſuch a Perſon honourable, both by his Place, and by his Train? Nay, what Potentate of the Earth would not rejoyce to change all his Glory with ſuch a *Lazarus*?

And this (*Laſtly*) is the true and proper Honour that God reſerves for ſuch as honour him, (*viz.*) the Glories of another Life: Whether they ſhall be welcomed with a *Come ye bleſſed*, with a *well done good and faithful Servant*; where every one of the innumerable Hoſt ſhall commend, every one congratulate, every one make room to receive, the pi-

ous

ous Soul into the Participation of Eternal Joy--And thus ſhall it be done to the Man whom God will honour.

And now I come to the Inferences wherein I propoſed to apply the Doctrine of the Text (viz.) *That it is a wiſe Ambition to ſeek that Honour that cometh from God.* It is an Ambition that will appear to be wiſe, both *from the ſafety of its Object*, and *from the Juſtice of its Methods*; and *from the Security of its End.*

Reſpect, and Eſtimation, and Applauſe, and Preference, and Grandure, (the ſeveral *Rayes* that make up our *Glory*) are ſuch pleaſing things, and ſo ſtrongly captivate the vanity of our nature; that they commonly make us in haſt, ſo that we cannot ſtay for them till ſuch time as we are fit. The Methods of Virtue ſeem too ſlow, the Retributions of the next Life ſeem too far of, and the attendance of Providence in this Life ſeems too tedious to our eager deſires; and hence Springs the original miſ-

miſchief, we project to get our ſelves Honour from the World, that is (generally ſpeaking) from the weak and injudicious, and ſo we neceſſarily become worſe for all the Honour we get: For we thereby grow more vain and light, more ignorant of our ſelves, and of our own meaſure; and by taking our ſelves to be greater than we are, we never care to reform our ſelves to what we ſhould be.

But what have we in the mean time in our hearts to bottom our pretences to Honour upon? Why--we have either Riches or alliance, or Courage, Learning or Wit, or Experience; we have done ſomething well, or at leaſt we *may* do; ſome fancied excellencies we have either of body, or mind, or fortune, or performances, or at leaſt of Intentions, for which we value our ſelves, and are impatient till others do ſo too---Thus it is that in our own Opinion we juſtifie our pretences to Honour. But in the mean

time

time we never conſider that all theſe excellencies (whatever they are our pride rears it ſelf upon) are certainly Snares and Temptations to ſin; and ſo ſerve in their own tendency to make us really more deſpicable, unleſs they be watched over and governed by a virtuous diſcretion: We never conſider that for all this aſpiring hurry, we *are by nature the Children of wrath*, and heirs of the utmoſt contempt; and muſt neceſſarily continue to be ſo, unleſs we change our ſelves; nor can we ever change our ſelves, unleſs we be truly humble. This well conſidered might make our high thought drop off, like an unſeaſonable blooming; and we ſhould find matter of controverſie to determine----Whether it were more uncomely for ſuch Creatures, in ſuch a ſtate, to ſeek for Honour, or more unſafe and dangerous to attain it.

Whereas to ſeek the Honour that comes from God is the happieſt of all the deſigns we can project; becauſe it takes

takes nothing within its compaſs, but what tends to the improving and dignifying our of nature, and the giving us a real bottom fit to bear Honour upon: For it begins in the Knowledge of our ſelves, which is proper humility; and is carried on by the changing of our ſelves, which is proper Virtue; and is finiſhed in centring all we do to the Honour of God; which is entirely that ſtate that God has pronounced worthy to be honoured by himſelf.

It is another miſchief of ſeeking worldly Honour, that as it is faulty in its object, ſo it is ſeldom innocent in its Methods. Virtue can never ceaſe to be a plauſible thing, and therefore they that covet Honour muſt ſometimes make uſe of Virtue; but yet we ſee that the Opinion of ill Men has got ſuch an influence in the very ſtating of Honour, that many things are accounted honourable (not without great abſurdity) that are eſſentially vitious.

'Twas

'Twas bravely ſaid of *Phalaris* (as he records it in his *Epiſtle*) ἀδικεῖς, &c. No *Man ſhall outdoe me in good Turns*; but then he adds, *and no Man ſhall outdoe me in bad Turns*; and this he lookt upon to be as brave as the former. That a haughty Heathen ſhould eſpouſe ſuch a Principle is not ſo much a wonder: But for ſuch as call themſelves Chriſtians to meaſure Honour by the ſame ſtandard; and account it Honourable to be ſtout in Revenge and Injuries, is a notion ſo wild that we may as well account it to have been Honourable in *Lucifer*, that he durſt rebel againſt the Almighty; or Honourable in *Pharaoh* that amidſt all his Judgments he durſt cry---*Who is the Lord that I ſhould hearken unto him?* Nothing has occaſioned more miſchief in the World than this miſtaken Notion of Honour.

Not to mention the great Iniquities that the ſeeking of this Worldly miſtaken Honour *does* carry Men to, I ſhall only

ly inſtance in a few that are the leaſt. *Ex. gr.* He that ſeeks the Honour of Men muſt neceſſarily accommodate his actions to the approbation of thoſe he ſeeks it from, and his principal aim muſt be to *do that which will pleaſe*; but he that aims to do that which will *pleaſe* muſt oftentimes chooſe to do that which is *worſt*. (2) He that ſeeks the Honour of Men muſt neceſſarily, when he does any thing well, *do it with Oſtentation*; but Oſtentation is a worm that devours the good of all we do, and makes a Man (ſays the Son of *Sirach*) like a *Tree that eats up its own Fruit*. (3) He that ſeeks the Honour of Men muſt naturally ſtudy the *covering of his faults*; but he that ſtudies the covering of his faults is near the judgment of covering them from himſelf too; and he that cannot bear to be counted little in the eyes of others, will not long bear to be vile in his own Eyes: And this is the reaſon, why Pride above all other

Sins

Sins returns the feweſt to Repentance. But on the contrary, he that ſeeks the Honour that cometh from God, has a Deſign of a more manageable Compaſs, and his means entirely juſt: For he has but one to pleaſe, and he has a certain Method of pleaſing that one: *He ſeeks for Glory and Honour* (ſays the Apoſtle) *by patient Continuance in well-doing*: This is all his Method; and by this recommending himſelf to the Approbation of God alone; he is ſure that the Approbation of all wiſe and good Men will follow.

It is the laſt and moſt ſtinging Unhappineſs of worldly Ambition, that it is always ſubject to Diſappointment. To ſeek the Honour of Men is a very toilſome Chaſe after a very uncertain Game. How will Men watch and ſtudy, and attend and comply, and act and ſuffer, and labour and bleed, to attain to the mere Shadow of Honour; while the Subſtance might be ſecured

at

at a ſmaller Expence? For all the Duties of Religion, the Labours of Charity, the Offices of Devotion, the Diſcipline of Virtue, and all that God ordinarily requires of us in order to the Attainment of that ſubſtantial Honour that cometh from himſelf, does not amount to ſuch a Fatigue of Life, as Men will ordinarily paſs through, in purſuance of a popular Commendation of a complemental Breath. And after all this Pains, what is the Succeſs? Let him that ſeeks for Honour act as warily as he can, the World will divide in the Cenſure of what he does, and ſome will commend what others diſapprove; and ſometimes what was moſt commendably deſigned, will be reſented to his Diſgrace; and one Action miſinterpreted ſhall run back his Account farther, than a Multitude of his beſt Endeavours can repair. So ſhy a thing is Honour in the gaining; and yet when it is gained, wherein is it to be accounted of?

For ſuppoſing the Succeſs of the ambitious Man be never ſo fortunate; ſuppoſing that Bows, and Reverences, and ſmiling Titles, and pleaſing Characters fill the Meaſure of his Deſires, and follow him to the Grave; yet there they muſt make a ſtop; at leaſt his Enjoyment of them muſt ſtop there: And then when the Scene of Life ſhall be opened into Eternity, and the Soul at her Paſſage ſhall be ſtampt with that Character, whereby it muſt be diſtinguiſh'd for ever; when the Great, the Wiſe, the Valiant, the Favourite, the Commended ſhall be put into the Ballance, and all falſe Appearances being taken off, ſhall come forth, *Poor and wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and naked*; Alas! What a Mockery of Honour will this appear to have been? And how ſad the Fall from ſuch a height of Pageantry? So that the wiſeſt of all thoſe that ſeek for worldly Honour, and neglect the Eternal, are juſt as wiſe as

that

that Man, who ſhould ſpend his Patrimony in an Inn, to look great for a Day or two among mercenary Strangers, and then return home to paſs all the reſt of his Life in Beggery and Contempt. On the other ſide--he that ſeeks for the Honour that cometh from God, is ſure never to miſcarry; no Malice can prevent him, nor any Accident diſappoint him; his End is as ſecure as God is faithful; and the Joy of that End as far *exceeding* his hopes, as worldly things *fall ſhort* of the hopes of ſuch as place their happineſs in them.

If therefore it be urged that the Deſire of Honour is a natural and forcible Paſſion. I ſay it is well that it is ſo; becauſe there is an Honour ſo well worth our deſiring. If it be urged that the Deſire of Honour is an Indication of the moſt noble and generous Minds, I ſay, 'tis fit it ſhould be ſo accounted; becauſe they who are inſenſible of true Honour, muſt needs be both mean in

their Thoughts, and ſlack in their Applications. All I argue for is *this*—that our Paſſion be recovered out of its unhappy Miſtakes; *That we ſpend not our Mony for that which is not Bread; nor our Labour for that which ſatisfieth not*; that we ſeek not Froth and Bubbles inſtead of Honour. We need not fall out with the Paſſion, but only ſet it in the right way: Let us deſire the Honour that cometh from God; the Honour that is ſolid and beautifying: Let us take our flight at *this* as eagerly as we can; there is no danger of exceeding; the only danger is leaſt we deſire it not enough.

Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory be to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

Amen.

The

The Chriſtian Sacrifice.

A

SERMON

ON

ROM. XII. 1.

I beſeech you Brethren by the Mercies of God, that you preſent your Bodies a Living Sacrifice, Holy and Acceptable unto God; which is your Reaſonable Service.

PAſſing by the Prefatory Clauſe of the Words, wherein our Apoſtle applies himſelf to the Jews at *Rome*, with the moſt endearing Compellation (*My Brethren,*) with the moſt reſpectful Addreſs (*I beſeech you,*) and

with the moſt obliging Argument (*By the Mercies of God,*) giving us a Specimen, through all, of the proper Sweetneſs of a Chriſtian Application, and the moſt hopeful Method of edifying thoſe with whom we have to do; (I ſay) Paſſing by this Prefatory Clauſe; the reſt of the words preſent theſe two Matters to our Conſideration, (*viz.*) (1) *The Nature*, and (2) *The Commendation of the Chriſtian Sacrifice*: The *Nature* of it is implied in theſe words--*That you preſent your Bodies a Living Sacrifice*; and its *Commendation* in the following, where the Apoſtle ſays of this Sacrifice, that it is, *Holy and Acceptable unto God*, and our *Reaſonable Service.*

I begin with the Conſideration of the *Nature of the Chriſtian Sacrifice*: Concerning which, the ſeveral Expreſſions offer me to obſerve theſe three things, (*viz.*) Its *Matter*, its *Form*, and its *Quality.* Its *Matter* is ſaid to be *our Bodies*; its *Form*, *That they be preſented unto God*; and

and its *Quality*, that it muſt be *a Living Sacrifice.*

The word Sacrifice, in its moſt ſimple Senſe, ſignifies no more than the offering of ſomething unto God; whence it follows, that where-ever there is a Religion, there *muſt* be a Sacrifice; becauſe there can be no Religious Worſhip without the offering of *ſomething* to God. Now it was inſtituted under the Law, that Men ſhould offer Sacrifices of the Fruit of their Cattel, and of their Ground; but ſuch Sacrifices could extend to no more than a very defective Service; they came very ſhort of the great Ends of Religion; and very ſhort of what was fit for a Rational Creature to give, and for an Infinite Being to accept: And therefore our Apoſtle forms his Deſcription of the Chriſtian Sacrifice (in the Text) with a Reſpect of Oppoſition to thoſe Sacrifices of the Law; and implicitly argues thus much by it (*viz.*) That if we will make a worthy Offering, *Ho-*

ly and Acceptable unto God, and ſuch a one as may amount to the Eſtimation of *a Reaſonable Service*, we muſt offer ſomething better than Fruits and Beaſts; ſomething more ſuitable to the Majeſty of God, and more expreſſive of our Honour of him; and the only thing we have of this kind to offer, is *our ſelves*.

For although the Matter of our Sacrifice be expreſs'd in the Text by *our Bodies*, yet that muſt be interpreted of *our whole ſelves*: For *our* Bodies *alone* will not anſwer the Duty, becauſe they are but a *Part* of us; and we may learn from the Analogy of the Legal Inſtitution-- that whatſoever is offered to God muſt be entire: Thus, for example, when the Jew was to offer a Lamb, and could not reach the Charge of a Lamb, in ſuch a Caſe he might offer two Turtles, or two Pigeons; but half a Lamb (though of greater Price) would not have ſerved the turn; becauſe that to divide the Sacrifice had been to profane it. But

But that this Sacrifice of our ſelves muſt be entire, there is yet a greater Argument than can be drawn from the Analogy of that Service: For had the Jew *divided* his Lamb, his Sacrifice had only been *defective*, it had not therefore been *unclean*: But in the offering of *our ſelves* by *parcel* unto God, the part reſerved will *defile* the part offered, and render it abſolutely unclean. Thus the Malice or Pride of the Soul will poiſon all the Services of the Body, in like manner as the Filthineſs of the Fleſh will unhallow all the Offices of the Soul: Thus again, it is in vain that the Hand be liberal, if in the mean time the Eye be luſtful; it is in vain that the Appetite be temperate, if in the mean time the Hand be griping or unjuſt: Every ill that we *allow*, will canker and ſpoil every good that we do; and no Man can be clean to God, that is not clean throughout. And from hence it is evident, that *our Bodies* (in the Text) muſt be taken figu-

gurately, to ſignifie our *whole ſelves*; as in our Engliſh Idiom, we uſe the *ſomebody*, *any body*, to ſignifie entire Perſons. And ſo we have a proper Paraphraſe of the Text in the Communion-Office of our publick Liturgy, where 'tis ſaid---- *And here we offer and preſent unto thee, O Lord, our Selves, our Souls, and Bodies, to be a Reaſonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice unto thee.*

2. This being the *Matter* of our Sacrifice, we are next to ſee the Form of it, or the Manner in which this Sacrifice is to be made: And the Text tells us, it is by *preſenting our ſelves* unto God: That is, by dedicating and devoting our ſelves to his Service.

'Tis true, indeed, that we are ſo devoted already; for we all in our Baptiſm made this Vow, and entered into this ſolemn Engagement. That we would cleave unto God, and renounce all that might keep us at a diſtance from him: But yet the Text puts us in mind

of

of a farther Duty; for the word παραστῆσαι (which we tranſlate to *preſent*) ſignifies properly to *bring*, or to *render, that which was vowed before*; Thus (for example) when *Hannah* the Mother of *Samuel* begg'd a Son of God, and on that Condition *vowed* him to his Service; when afterwards ſhe brought her Son to the Tabernacle, and entered him into his Attendance there, ſhe may properly be ſaid παραστῆσαι, to have *rendered* her Son, and ſo abſolved her Vow.

Eraſmus tranſlates the word by *exhibeatis*, & adds thereupon, *q.d. Præſtate, quod profeſſi eſtis; exhibetur enim quod, ante promiſſum, re præſtatur.*

Baptiſm is the *Hannah* that has promiſed us all to God, but has left it to our ſelves to make that Promiſe good; and this is that the Text calls upon us to do.

Remember then, that we hold it for a Rule of Truth, in all Inſtances of Promiſe, *Better it is that thou ſhouldſt not vow, than that thou ſhouldſt vow, and not pay*: But when the Inſtance comes to be ſo high, as the Condition of a Covenant for

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Eternity, no Man can too much consider the Importance of that Rule.

In the last Chapter of *Joshua*, there is a remarkable Passage betwixt that good Man, and the People of *Israel*: After having recounted several Instances of God's Power, and Goodness, which they were well conscious of; he, in fine, bids them chuse, and profess openly, *whether they would* serve God, or no: Hereupon the People instantly make an Engagement, *That they will serve the Lord*: *Joshua*, seeing how forward they were to promise, checks their Indeliberation, and argues against them, on this manner--*But you cannot serve the Lord, for he is a Holy God, he is a Jealous God; he will not forgive your Transgressions, nor your Sins: If you forsake the Lord, he will turn against you, and consume you.* This Caution notwithstanding, the People adhere to their Promise, and cry again--*Nay, but we will serve the Lord*: Upon which *Joshua*, instead of commending their Zeal, seems rather to cool it again, with this Reply---*Therefore* (says he)

he) *you are witneſſes againſt your ſelves, that you have choſen the Lord to ſerve him: And they ſaid, we are witneſſes.* In the whole Paſſage we may obſerve, that *Joſhua* is arguing expreſly for the Service of God; and yet arguing as much againſt the Promiſe to ſerve him, unleſs it be very delibetately, and ſeriouſly made: To put us in mind, that the making of a Promiſe to God is a very awful thing; and that if it be not kept, it will certainly bring theſe two Miſchiefs upon the Promiſers, (1) That God will puniſh the Sins of ſuch more ſeverely than of any others, becauſe he is more immediately concern'd in the Sins of ſuch Men: And (2) that ſuch Men *become witneſſes againſt themſelves*, (viz.) witneſſes that they thought fit to chooſe that, which they do not think fit to ſtand to; and ſo being made witneſſes *againſt themſelves*, they are cut off from all pleading *for themſelves*, in the Day of Account.

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If we will submit to the Force of *Joshua*'s Argument, we must lay to heart our Christian Promises; we must look upon our selves as set a-part, and consecrated to the Service of God, and therefore separate from what is sinful; and we must take care, that our daily Practice repeat and confirm the Engagements of our Baptism: And this is actually to *make* our Sacrifice; whereas to have made the Promise of our Sacrifice, carries nothing in it but the Articles of higher Guilt and Conviction.

But, forasmuch as the Matter of our Christian Oblation consists of several Parts, *viz.* of as many Parts as we our selves are compos'd of---Understanding, Will, Passions, Affections, Senses, and Members; and each of these require a several Conduct, I shall add one word of particular Direction to each of them.

1. Then, in order---We must dedicate our Understanding *to know Jesus Christ, and him Crucified*, that is, to learn the

the Patience and Love of Jeſus: And for a Motive let us conſider-----That without this, nothing elſe can poſſibly make us wiſe.

We muſt dedicate our Will to that Holy Rule of Reſignation---*Not as I will, but as thou wilt*: And for a Motive let us conſider---That what God wills for us, is always ſafe; but what we will for our ſelves, we are never ſure, it will be ſafe for us to attain it.

We muſt dedicate our Paſſions (I mean our Anger, Fear, Grief, and Hatred) to the Diſcipline of Sin, to be ſpent and exhauſted in that Affair; and for a Motive let us conſider---That there is hardly any other buſineſs in the World, that theſe Paſſions can wiſely, and innocently be imployed upon.

We muſt dedicate our Affections (I men our Love, Hope, Joy, and Deſire) to the *purſuit of things above*: And for a Motive let us conſider---That all things

things below debase our Affections at least, if they do not defile them.

We must dedicate our Senses to the γυμναόια, (as the Apostle directs, *Heb.* 5. 14.) to have them exercised and trained, and under restraint: And for a Motive let us consider, that if they *are let loose*, they will so impose upon our Understanding (as the Apostle intimates in the *same* verse) That *we shall not be able to discern betwixt Good and Evil.*

Finally, we must dedicate our Members *to be the Instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness*: And for a Motive let us consider, how it is that these Members ought to be imployed, which are the Members of Christ, as well as ours.

Thus it is our Sacrifice is to be made: In respect of which, every Man is a Priest unto himself: For indeed, who but our selves can offer us unto God? Others may beseech or advise; but none

none has any command over the Motions of our Heart, but our own Will; and therefore that Will muſt be the Prieſt. And it is for this Reaſon, that the whole People of Chriſtianity are ſtiled in Scripture *a Holy Prieſthood*, and *a Royal Prieſthood*. The latter Epithet denoting the great Honour conferred on us, in that we have not only leave, but Right and Authority, to make a Preſent of our ſelves to God, with aſſurance to be accepted in Chriſt Jeſus.

The third thing I am to obſerve of this Sacrifice, is its *Quality*--*It muſt be a Living one.*

The word *Living* marks a notorious Difference between the legal Sacrifices, and this of ours: For as in the legal Sacrifice, the Beaſt was *firſt* to be killed, and then ſpent in an Act of God's Worſhip; ſo (on the contrary) in the Chriſtian Sacrifice the Man is to dedicate his Life, and to ſpend that in the Worſhip of God.

And this Difference is pointed out by the *firſt* Notion of the word *Living*, as it is oppoſed to natural Death. But the ſame word has other moral Significations in Scripture, which are more particularly inſtructive to our preſent Duty. We may obſerve that in Scripture, the word *Living* ſignifies (ſecondarily) three things.

(1) It ſignifies *Pure* in oppoſition to *Sin*, which is a Kind of Death.

(2) It ſignifies *Active* in oppoſition to *Sloth*, which is another Kind of Death: And

(3) It ſignifies *Vigorous* in oppoſition to *Impotence*, which is another Kind of Death.

(1) It ſignifies *Pure* in oppoſition to *Sin*.--Thus the Father in the Parable ſays concerning his Son, when returned from his vitious Courſes--*This my Son is alive again.* For we muſt take notice, that in the Account of God (as he has manifeſted in his word) the Life of a Man

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(as Man) is not indicated by *Senſe and Motion*, but by *Virtue*, and the *Quickening of the Spirit* : Nor is the *Criſis* of our Health to be taken from the Temperament of Heat and Moiſture, but from the Temperament of the Love and Fear of God, in our Hearts.

In the Eye of the World, that Man ſeems to live moſt *advantageouſly*, who lives in *pleaſure*; but the Apoſtle tells us of ſuch a one--*That he is dead whilſt he liveth.* When an ill Man attends a Funeral, he comforts himſelf to think what a happy Difference there is between himſelf and the Corps; for he can live and enjoy himſelf, while the other can only ſtink and putrefie: Whereas the Scripture tells us, there is *no* difference betwixt theſe two; becauſe the ill Man anſwers the true Ends of Life, no more than does the Dead; nay, he putrefies and ſtinks aſmuch, to a wiſe Underſtanding, as the Carcaſe does, to our common Senſe. And this is no more than

what our Saviour intimates in that Reply to his Disciple, *Matth.* 8. 22. *Follow thou me, and let the Dead bury their Dead.*

So that *Living* imports one quickned by Grace, and raised up to the State of a pure Intention of Soul; one fixt with strong Purposes, and fervent Desires to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God: And such a one presenting himself to God, under such a State of Intention, becomes properly a Living Sacrifice: For a pure and sincere Intention is the first Point from which we may be said to be *spiritually* alive.

(2) The word *Living* signifies active in opposition to Sloth.

Thus Running-waters are in the Holy Stile, called *Living-waters*: And (on the contrary) the Apostle, *Eph.* 5. 14. reckons the Slothful among the Dead.

And this signification of the word puts us in mind--That, in order to an acceptable Sacrifice, we must be diligent

gent in the Execution, as well as pure in the Intention of our Duty. A pure Intention, without Activeneſs in the Diſcharge, is properly repreſented by the fooliſh Virgins in the Parable; they purpoſed as well as any, and their ſtile of Virgins imports no leſs; but they were fooliſh becauſe they ſlept, and were ſlothful; for therefore they wanted Oil in their Lamps; and therefore they were excluded at the Coming of the Bridegroom.

Slackneſs in the Buſineſs of Religion is fatal upon a double Account---Becauſe it makes us fail in compaſſing our Task; and not only ſo, but it is an expreſs Affront to God, who imploys us with the Encouragement of ſo great a Reward.

The very Beaſts therefore, when laid upon God's Altar, (give me leave to ſay) were not to be dead *there*; they muſt, as it were, be alive again, and be actuated a-new by Fire. And that ſame

Fire was, both in its Uſe, and in its Original, a deſigned Emblem of that Warmth of Affection, which is required to quicken all the Offices of our Sacrifice. A Warmth that is to be derived from Heaven, from the Influences of God's Holy Spirit; and therefore it is, that thoſe Influences are called in Scripture *the Baptiſm of Fire.* Water is not ſufficient for us, although it cleanſe us; becauſe it is a ſluggiſh Element; there muſt be Fire likewiſe to actuate and inflame, and mount us upwards. The truth whereof, if you will take it in plainer Terms, It is this---that Innocence it ſelf, if *alone* (ſuppoſing it poſſible it ſhould be *alone*) I ſay Innocence it ſelf, if *alone*, would not render us accepted of God; becauſe he requires farther that we ſhould be likewiſe diligent, and active towards acquired Goodneſs: And indeed without this Qualification, how is it poſſible we ſhould acquit our ſelves in any Proportion towards thoſe general

ral Charges of the Goſpel, (*viz.*) Of *watchfulneſs in Prayer*, of *labouring in Charity*, of *purſuing Peace*, of *perfecting Patience*, of *redeeming the Time*, of *uſing all Diligence*, of *walking worthy of the Lord to all well-pleaſing, being fruitful in all good Works*; and (in a word) of *ſtriving to enter in at the ſtreight Gate*; which imports a ſtrong Endeavour, and that enforc'd with this Caution---That *many ſhall ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able*: Where it is implied, that bare *ſeeking* cannot ſucceed, becauſe it is too ſupine, becauſe it is not ſufficiently active.

(3) The third ſignification of the word *Living* is vigorous, in oppoſition to Impotence; and thus the word ζῶντα, ſignifies in all thoſe Texts, where our Tranſlation renders it *Lively*: As---*who hath begotten to a lively Hope*; And, *mine Enemies are lively and ſtrong*, that is, vigorous and ſtrong. And this ſignification of the word minds us particularly, of the proper *Seaſon* of our Sacrifice.

For as active denotes the Exercise, so vigorous denotes the Power of acting; whence we may observe, that *all Seasons* will not serve us, wherein we *may* be active: For though the *Will* should not be wanting, yet, at some time, the very *Power* will fail.

If a Man that is to run a Race, shall inconsiderately lie in the Cold, and benumb his Limbs, 'tis in vain to exhort such a one to make speed; for, though he would, he cannot. It is requisite therefore, that our Sacrifice be presented in the Season of such a Vigour, as may render it capable of being active towards God and Goodness. And this Lesson was pointed out by the State of all the Sacrifices that were appointed in the Law - they were all to be offered in the Prime, and Vigour of their Age.

In respect of this Qualification my Address becomes more particular - *To you, O young Men, because you are strong* (as St. *John* words it) or (what imports the

the ſame) becauſe you are vigorous; that is, you are now in ſuch a State both of Body and Soul, and Affections, as is moſt ſubſervient to Piety. For in thoſe Years it is, that our Underſtandings are capable of the firmeſt Impreſſions; *Then* our Wills are moſt ductile and pliable; *then* our Affections moſt patient of Diſcipline; *then* our Bodies moſt uſeful to our Minds; *then* our Minds have leaſt of Perturbations; *then* our whole is moſt quick and governable, and moſt ſucceſsfully applied to the Offices of Duty. Loſe not therefore your irrecoverable Advantage; but anſwer now, when God calls with moſt Affection; anſwer now, while Nature it ſelf is readieſt to anſwer: Offer your ſelves, while you are moſt worth the Offering; and while the Odour of Innocence may beſt perfume your Oblation. Govern therefore your Appetites *before the Evil day come: Now you may gird them, and carry them whither you will*; but if you neglect

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the Seaſon--*They will hereafter gird you, and carry you whither you would not.*

An early Virtue is a moſt Worthy, and Valuable offering; honoured, and bleſt with the kindeſt Acceptance of God: But when a Man ſhall look into himſelf, and find his Parts and Faculties depraved, vitiated, weakned; ſtain'd with the Pollution, ſtiff with the Cuſtom, wearied with the Service, ſick with the Diſappointments, and darkned with the Impoſtures, of Sin; what a melancholy Task muſt ſuch a one have, to prepare an acceptable Sacrifice to God out of ſo Vile a Herd? It is certain, that Old-age, and the Infirmities that creep upon us through the bare Influence of Time, bring with them a great debility toward *ſeveral Offices* of Virtue; but (what is of more concern) it is certain, that old, ill habits, and the Stifneſs that is contracted by accuſtoming to Vice, bring a deplorable Impotence towards them *all*.

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Having thus far viewed the Nature of our Sacrifice, I paſs to its Commendation, which the Text makes to conſiſt of three Members, (*viz.*) that it is *Holy*, *that it is acceptable*, and that it *is our reaſonable Service.* All which particulars, I ſhall ſhew, are ſo peculiar to this ſpiritual Sacrifice of our ſelves, that they never could be duly aſcribed to any other Sacrifice, or Manner of Worſhip.

1. Then---This Sacrifice of ours *is Holy.*

We muſt not ſay, but that the Ritual Sacrifices of the Law, for as much as they were inſtituted by God as a part of his Worſhip, were in ſome ſenſe Holy; but, ſuch was their Nature, they were Holy becauſe they were inſtituted, not inſtituted becauſe they were Holy; and therefore God ſays of them expreſly, *that they were Ordinances not good*: And 'tis in oppoſition to theſe that the Prophet *Micah* ſays, *the Lord hath ſhewed thee, O Man*

Man, what is good; and what is that, but, To do Juſtice, and love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy God? Which are the pure Offices of our Chriſtian, our ſpiritual, Sacrifice.

To ſee into the ground of this Truth, we muſt obſerve---That nothing is capable of real Holineſs, but an Intelligent Being, or Mind (or at leaſt that which is actuated by a Mind, as our Bodies in the State of Union are;) whence it follows, that where there is no Mind, there no thing, or action, can be really Holy. And therefore it was purely from the Mind of the Sacrificer, that the Sacrifices of the Law, (notwithſtanding their Inſtitution) took their Form and Value: And ſo the good Man's Lamb ſent up a Savour of a ſweet ſmell unto God; while the ill man's Lamb was *but like the cutting off a Dogs neck.* And whereas it was expreſly commanded, *Levit.* 2. 13. That *Salt was to be uſed in all their Sacrifices*; we may reaſon-

ſonably ſuppoſe that Salt was deſigned for the Symbol of the Soul; for ſo the ancients accounted it: And ſo as the Beaſt, tho' upon the Altar, was profane without the Salt; ſo both Salt, and Beaſt, and the whole Action, was unhallowed, unleſs the Soul of the Offerer were made part of the Oblation.

2. The ſecond member of its Commendation makes it *acceptable*. Whether any Sacrifice can poſſibly be acceptable to God, beſides this of our ſelves, we may judge from the firſt Inſtance of Divine Worſhip that is mentioned in holy Writ, I mean the Sacrifice of *Cain*: *He brought of the Fruits of the ground an offering to God*, (ſays the Text) *but God had not reſpect unto it*. The reaſon whereof, I do not ſuppoſe to be that expreſt in the old *Monkiſh* verſe, *Sacrificabo macrum, nec dabo pingue Sacrum*; as if ſo be *Cain* had brought ſome *mean refuſe Fruits*, and that had been the reaſon of his Non-accep-

tance:

tance: It had been as hard for *Cain* to have met with bad Fruit, (conſidering the ſtate of the ground at that time) as it had been abſurd for him to grudge that which was *good*, in ſuch an Unrivall'd plenty: But the reaſon was plainly that which God himſelf alledges in thoſe words---*If thou doſt well ſhall thou not be accepted? But if thou doſt ill, Sin lieth at the door*: Sin lies in the way, and hinders thy acceptance: This was the reaſon why *Cain* was not accepted; he was a Man of a looſe, and alienated Mind; and tho' he brought his Fruits for Formalities ſake, yet he brought not his heart nearer unto God; and this would have barr'd acceptance, tho' he had brought his Fruits from *Eden* it ſelf.

But (what is yet of a cloſer concern to us to conſider) we know there are other Sacrifices more nearly related to Holineſs, than the Ritual could be; Sacrifices of a moral Nature, perpetually obliging; and therefore a part of

of our Chriſtian Service; which yet are not acceptable to God, unleſs our ſelves are firſt offered to him.

By theſe moral Sacrifices I mean,

1. Prayers, and Praiſes, which are called---The *Calves of our Lips*, becauſe offered to God, as thoſe Beaſts were by the Law; but of a much more holy Nature than they; and therefore, *Pſal.* 50. 13. where God rejects the *blood of Bulls and of Goats*, he requires *thankſgiving* as a proper, and laſting Service: And yet (for all this) Prayers and Praiſes borrow all their value from the mind of the offerer; ſo that if that be unſanctified, both of them are turned into Sin: We are told no leſs, *verſ.* 16. Ibid.

There is another moral Sacrifice---That of Charity, a *Sacrifice wherewith God is well pleaſed*, ſays the Apoſtle: And this Sacrifice is in ſome ſenſe better than the former, becauſe it always leaves ſome good effect behind it, that is, the

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Receiver has benefit by the Gift, whatever the mind of the giver be; (which is more than can be said of Prayers, and Praises) and yet while our Souls are at a distance from God, Charity is but a lost expence: And accordingly the Apostle tells us, of a possible Case, wherein *we may give all our goods to feed the Poor, and yet it shall profit us nothing.*

Nay there is yet a nobler Sacrifice than all these, I mean Martyrdom, when Man offers up his Life for the Seal of his Religion: And what can bear a nearer affinity to Holiness than this? And yet the Apostle tells us, of a possiblility, *of giving our Bodies to be burnt*, and yet it *shall profit us nothing.* So that it is not the *Blood*, nor yet the cause, but purely the Mind, that makes the Martyr: The Sincere Love of God must recommend what we do, or else it cannot be acceptable: And this Love is the Soul of that Sacrifice my Text requires.

3. The

(3) The laſt Commendation of our Chriſtian Sacrifice is---that it is a *Reaſonable Service*, i. e. a Service worthy a Reaſonable Creature's Offering to God. Let us ſee how far any other Sacrifice might be ſo accounted.

It is a Commendation to the Sacrifices under the Law, that they were in uſe *before the Law*: For it is evident, that many Conſtitutions under the Law were purely arbitrary, and ſeem to have been grounded upon no better Reaſon, than that of amuſing the thoughts, and taking up the Time of a buſie, fanciful, and carnal People: Whereas the Worſhip that was before the Law, and that in Univerſal Practice, cannot ſeem to have been leſs, than conſentaneous to the common Reaſon of Mankind. We read of this Practice of ſacrificing, as high as *Cain*, and *Abel*; and who can doubt but that they received it from their Father? And that he uſed it before them,

and perhaps in Paradise it self? Nor can any argue it of absurdity, to believe, that those skins wherewith our first Parents are said to have been cloathed, were the skins of such Beasts as they had offered in Sacrifice; there being Reasons for the Rite of sacrificing, that Comport with the State of Innocence, as well as that of the Fall. And yet those very Reasons upon which this Practice was founded, may serve to evidence, that it was not in it self a *Reasonable Service. (Ex. gr.)*

The first Reason for the Rite of sacrificing, seems to have been the acknowledgment of God's Supreme Dominion; the acknowledgment that as all these beneficial Creatures proceeded from his Bounty; so of Right they were all *his*: And this we find respected, in many old Forms of the Jewish Consecration. And yet it is certain, that he who will reasonably acknowledge God's Dominion, must do it out

of

of his Heart, and not out of his Herd: And *Samuel* intimated thus much to *Saul*, when he told him that---*To obey was better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Rams.*

A ſecond Reaſon for ſacrificing was the Profeſſion of Thankfulneſs to God; Men intimating thereby, that they were ready to part with the moſt precious of what they had for his ſake: And this made it neceſſary for every one to offer out of his own Stock, and at his own Expence; and this *David* ſeems to have reſpected, when he replied to *Araunah*, *that he would not offer to God of that which coſt him nought*: And yet it is certain, that he who will reaſonably expreſs his Thankfulneſs to God, muſt do it by Charity, that is, by parting with what he has for God's ſake, to thoſe that *want* it, which God does not: And thus *David* makes Charity the Moral of ſacrificing, *Pſ.* 16. 3. *My Soul, thou haſt ſaid*

unto the Lord, my Goods are nothing unto thee, but to the Saints upon the Earth in whom is my delight.

A third Reaſon for ſacrificing was in regard of ſin; to acknowledge by a Symbol, that *the wages of ſin is death*; and, that as the Beaſt was ſlain, ſo (in Juſtice) the Sacrificer ſhould be too: And yet it is certain, that he who will reaſonably expreſs the Demerits of Sin, muſt do it, not by the Penance of his Beaſt, but by his own Repentance, and Mortification: And thus again the *Pſalmiſt* makes Repentance a Sacrifice, *Pſ.* 51. 16. *Thou deſireſt not Sacrifice, elſe would I give it thee, but thou delighteſt not in burnt Offerings: The Sacrifices of God are a troubled Spirit, a broken, and contrite Heart, O Lord, thou wilt not deſpiſe.*

A fourth Reaſon for ſacrificing was to ſignify the great Propitiation, the Death of Chriſt; and to prefigure that Blood

Blood which was able to atone, and cleanſe, though the Blood of Bulls, and Goats could not. And yet Reaſon tells us, that though the propitiating Blood of Chriſt might be ſhadowed forth by a ſlain Lamb, yet it could not be applied to the Remiſſion of Sins, but only by an humble Faith; upon which Account it is ſaid, that by *Faith* Abel *offered a more Excellent Sacrifice than* Cain, *Heb.* 11.

From all which it appears, that the Rite of ſacrificing, did never in it ſelf amount to a *Reaſonable Service*: All it amounted to was no more than a Reaſonable Sign, or Symbol; but the Reaſonable Service it ſelf conſiſted purely in the Moral Duties, that were ſignified, and pointed out by thoſe Symbols, (*viz.*) Obedience, Charity, Repentance, and Faith: All which are the Eſſentials of our Chriſtian Sacrifice, when we offer up our ſelves unto God. It is evident

therefore, that the Offering *of our ſelves unto God, is the only Reaſonable Service*; and that alone wherewith God is pleaſed, or hath been pleaſed at any time ſince the beginning of the World. And therefore the Jew, *that was a Jew in the Spirit*, that is, who advanced to theſe Spiritual Duties that were pointed out by his ſacrificing, was *Holy*, and *Acceptable to God*; whereas he who was a Jew in the Letter only, never arrived to an acceptable Worſhip.

And yet I cannot but obſerve, that a Jew *in the bare Letter*, might ſeem a Saint in compariſon to a Formal Chriſtian, or a Chriſtian in the Letter. For ſuch a Jew ſubmitted to the Burden of many troubleſome Ceremonies, Purgations, and Reſtraints; to the great Expence of many Sacrifices, both ſtated, and occaſional; to the Labour of many Journeys, to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*; for *there* all his Vows were to be per-

performed; and all this bore a fair Face of Fearing, and Honouring God; though in the mean time his Heart were not right with God. But when a Chriſtian to whom all theſe burdenſome Duties are remitted, ſhall likewiſe fail in the Offices of his Moral Oblation: When *he* ſhall pray at his Leiſure, and work at his Eaſe, and give at his Diſcretion, as if all Religious Duties were ſubmitted to his Convenience, and good-liking: When *he* ſhall not defraud himſelf of the Pleaſures of Sin; and in the mean time look upon Chriſt as his Righteouſneſs, and ſimple Faith as his Buckler of Defence; ſuch a one makes Chriſtianity to be the moſt empty, worthleſs, unreaſonable Service, that ever was in the World.

But on the contrary, he that ſhall ſerve God as a Spirit, in Spirit and in Truth; he that ſhall ſerve God as Holy, with Probity of Manners; as omni-

ſcient, with Reverence of Thoughts; as every where preſent, with Compoſure of Actions; as bountiful, with Willingneſs of Heart; as merciful, with imitating that Mercy we hope for; ſuch a one ſhews what Chriſtianity is; and that it is the only Standard of a *Reaſonable Service*: Such a one offers a Sacrifice worthy himſelf; and (as it is graciouſly interpreted) worthy of God; and (as the Prophet *Micah* has rated it) more worthy than Thouſands of Rams, and Ten Thouſands of Rivers of Oil.

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THE

THE EXCELLENCY OF REASON,

No ARGUMENT againſt THE

WISDOM OF BELIEVING:

OR,

A Cenſure of the *Remarks* UPON Mr. *YOUNG's Diſcourſes.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE Excellency of REASON, No ARGUMENT againſt THE Wiſdom of BELIEVING.

WE know it has been the fate of ſome very good Men, firſt to be cloathed in Bear-skins, and then brought forth to be baited for Beaſts. And juſt in ſuch a manner the Author of the *Remarks* has treated Mr. Y---'s *Sermons*, loading them with Charges to which they have no more alliance than a Man has to a Bear.

But it ſeems ſomething was to be ſaid; and not much matter what, ſo it ſquar'd with the Old Rule, (*viz.*) *Calum-*

lumniate boldly, and 'tis a great chance but ſome of it will ſtick.

For the ſake of Truth, I am willing to try, whether Aſperſions, ſo dilute as theſe, will ſtick or no.

I. The Firſt Charge is, *That Mr.* Y. *has confounded the Notion of Wiſdom.*

In Anſwer to this, we muſt obſerve, That it is an eaſier Task to adapt Things to Notions, than Notions to Things; and to form a Scheme of what we would have them to be, than to give a juſt Account of what they are: And by the advantage of this Method, the Author of the *Remarks* has found That *at home*, which (if Holy *Job* be not out, *Chap.* 28. 13.) he might have travell'd *over all the Land of the Living, and not have found* (viz.) *a* Humane Wiſdom, that is, *a True Wiſdom, ſecure from deception and erring, and qualified to be a ſure and ſafe Guide in Matters of Religion.* Mr. Y.

Page 3. & *paſſim.*

Mr. *Y.* on the other hand, thought himſelf obliged to repreſent *Humane Wiſdom*, not as it might be conceiv'd in a fond *Idea*, but as it might be met with in Reality and Fact: He thought it abſurd to imagine that *Humane Wiſdom* was exempt from the Teint of *Humane Corruption*; and therefore he repreſents it not only as Limited and Deceivable, (for thus it was in the ſtate of its Primitive Excellency) but likewiſe as prone to Error, from the Influence of Conceit, Partiality, Intereſt, Complexion, Education, and ſeveral other Prejudices; which though they made it more bold to undertake, yet ſtill they made it more weak and unable to diſcharge the Office of a Guide.

Mr. *Y.* thought likewiſe, that when, by a number of Inſtances (beginning as high as Paradiſe it ſelf) it appeared that multitudes of Men, who had as large a ſtock of Natural Wiſdom or Reaſon as any others can pretend to, had

miſ-

miſcarry'd in Religion, and ſwerv'd from Truth, with all their Reaſon about them: And that ſince it was *Reaſon* that form'd their Schemes, *Reaſon* that furniſh'd their Arguments, *Reaſon* that both perſuaded them to, and ſuſtained them in their Errours; *Reaſon* might have been allow'd to bear ſome ſhare of the blame, and their Miſcarriages might have ſerv'd for a caution to others how they truſted the ſame Conduct: But ſince the *Remarker* is not pleas'd to have it ſo, I will a while ſuſpend the Diſpute, to congratulate him for Two or Three Iſſues.

1. For that he has given Men ſuch a comfortable Evidence, That *they ought to believe themſelves Wiſe.* For as this is a very Popular Office, ſo it cannot but bring him in an heap of thanks.

2. For that he has fortify'd *Reaſon* with ſuch Rules as perhaps were wanting heretofore, and from which the Sons of *Adam* may take new Courage

Page 3.

Courage to confide in themſelves: For Although our Firſt Parent miſcarry'd through the Deceivableneſs of his *Reaſon*; yet after ſuch Rules preſcrib'd for *Reaſon* to proceed by, there is little fear of its miſtaking ſo again.

3. For that he has tempted ſome to wiſh that He himſelf had been placed in Paradiſe, becauſe he would aſſuredly have kept Poſſeſſion there; for he would have baffled the Deceiver, and *refuted his Suggeſtions by moſt certain and ſubſtantial Reaſons*; which *Adam*, it ſeems, had not preſence of Mind to conſider. Page 8.

But to come to the Merits of the Cauſe, (which the *Remarker* has thought fit wholly to avoid) --- I will ſuppoſe *Reaſon* to be as *Excellent* as himſelf can conceive it, and yet this founds it no Title to be a guide in Religion: For had Reaſon been ſufficient to be a Guide in theſe Matters, what need had God to furniſh us with another? If Reaſon could

could poſſibly have led us into the Knowledge of what we are to Do and Believe, God would certainly have ſpared the Miſſion both of his Servants and his Son: But if Revelation therefore be appointed for our Guide, (and who is ſo bold as to deny it?) what have we to alledge why Reaſon ſhould pretend to uſurp its Character, and invade its Office? The truth is, This other Guide that God hath vouchſafed us, the *Remarker* ſeems not to like by any means: For he never mentions Revelation, but (as if it were Thiſtles in his Mouth) he drops it again immediately; nor does he evet expreſsly own it under its Character of a Guide: Which is a greater affront to Providence, than Mr. *Y.* ever offer'd to Reaſon: But of this there will perhaps be occaſion to ſpeak more by and by.

In the mean time, the Summ of this Firſt Charge amounts to thus much, (*viz.*) That Mr. *Y.* has confounded the No-

Notion of Wiſdom; and if he has done ſo, it is only by aſſerting, That Humane Wiſdom is obnoxious to thoſe Infirmities that are inſeparable from Humane Nature: And if the *Remarker* has clear'd the Notion, it is only by aſcribing to it a Property that belongs incommunicably to the Spirit of God, which is, *to guide us into Divine Truth*, St. *John* 16. 13. And let the Indifferent judge whether the Notion be not well cleared.

II. The Second Charge is, *That Mr.* Y. *has obſcur'd the Notion of Faith.* Page 4.

And the Reaſons aſſign'd are, Becauſe,

1 He oppoſes Faith to Reaſon.

2 He ſets up Faith for a Guide.

3 He requires Faith without Reaſon.

Now Mr. *Y.* has done nothing of all this; but this Gentleman had certainly Reaſon, to ſay ſo: And this is a Proof

of one Advantage thoſe Men have who pretend to follow Reaſon, (*viz.*) If Reaſon lead them not into Truth, it will lead them into Falſhoods that are more pleaſing; and this will give better content.

Mr. *Y.* (on the contrary) never oppoſes Faith to Reaſon; but only complains of thoſe others that oppoſe Reaſon to Faith: Nor does he ever call Faith a Guide. He ſays, indeed, that Faith is the only Means to keep us Safe and Wiſe; but that is, becauſe it is to be guided by Revelation, upon which it may depend without being deceived. And what colour is there for ſaying he requires Faith without Reaſon, when he confines Faith for its Object wholly and ſolely to the Word of God, which carries in it all the Reaſons of Believing? When he ſays, That though many things revealed are Myſterious, yet *ſtill it is the higheſt Act of Reaſon, to believe him that cannot deceive us*: and when he ſays,

ſays, that although the things Revealed (particularly concerning the Divine Eſſence) ſeem to be incredible; yet this ſeeming Incredibility is no balk to Faith, for this Reaſon, Becauſe, *If what is Revealed concerning God were always adapted to our Comprehenſion, how could It reach, or with any fitneſs repreſent that Nature which we allow to be Incomprehenſible?*

So that whereas this Gentleman gleans out ſcraps of Sentences to poſſeſs his Reader that Mr. *Y.* always ſpeaks abſurdly; had he but been ſo ingenuous as to take in Antecedents and Conſequents, he might have ſav'd himſelf the pains of ſo much Prevarication, and me of this Animadverſion upon it.

But becauſe he accounts that *his Zeal for Faith is worth boaſting of*, Page 4. I ſuppoſe he is willing the World ſhould be call'd in to be Witneſs of this Zeal of his.

And wherein then does it appear? He defines Faith to be *an Aſſent of the*

Mind to ſomething that is Credible, as Credible, upon the evident Motives of Credibility. Now had he humbled himſelf to ſay with St. *Paul*, that *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*; or, that Faith is an Aſſent to what God has revealed: This, perhaps, would have been beneath and unbecoming the Philoſophical Air of his Style. Some perhaps will ſay this: but others will be apt to ſay, That it had been ſhort of his purpoſe, who, by the looſe latitude he leaves to every Man to determine, (1.) what is Credible, and, (2.) what are the evident Motives of Credibility, ſeemingly deſigns to leave every one at diſcretion to believe nothing but what he pleaſes.

In the next place,---As to the more determinate Object of Faith, What does he ſay it is? Why, it is even what Reaſon can pick out. Only, *becauſe we are not able to ſpin out all Truths meerly out of our own Underſtanding, without any*

Page 3.

any other Help, (which is the humbleſt Conceſſion that he has ſtoop'd to in his whole Treatiſe:) Therefore Reaſon muſt apply for theſe Helps: And whither? Why, (1.) *To the Works of Creation.* 'Tis true, St. *Paul* tells the Heathens, That they might learn God and his Providence from the Works of the Creation; but he never ſends Chriſtians for their Learning thither. For how jejune are the Inſtructions of the Book of Nature, after we once know the Book of God? But we muſt ſuppoſe that this was intended as a favourable Reſerve for ſome of his Clients, who own no other Book but that of Nature. Page 9.

Well, as for the Others, he allows them to go farther for another Help, telling us that *there are ſome Men inſpired with the Holy Ghoſt, who are to inform our Reaſons what they are to believe and do.* But who thoſe are, he leaves it to the Diſcretion of others to determine; for he never vouchſafes Page 9.

to name either Prophets, or Apoſtles, or our Lord Jeſus himſelf: From which diſdainful looſneſs of his Intimation, he leaves us to apprehend theſe Two things; (1.) That he believes our Lord to have been *no more above a Man, than any of the Inſpired*; and, (2.) That he intends to bring all Pretenders to Inſpiration upon a level: ſo that the *Turks* and *Indians* may as well build Faith upon *Mahomet* and *Confucius*, as *Chriſtians* may upon the Bible. And this is enough to entitle him to that Zeal for Faith he thinks fit to boaſt of.

III. The Third Charge is, *That Mr. Y. has vilified and rejected the only Faculty that God has given us to judge of things by.*

And yet I will undertake, on the contrary, That Mr. *Y.* has given Reaſon its entire due.

The *Remarker* thought fit to cite *Prov.*

20.

20. 27. for the honour of its Original; Mr. *Y.* had done the ſame before; and ſhewn, withal how far it ſerv'd the *Gentiles* towards Natural Religion; and how far it may now ſerve Reveal'd Religion, both by Confirming Believers, and bringing Unbelievers to the acknowledgment of the Goſpel. But he warns Men likewiſe, that Reaſon has been all along ſo Opinionative, that it has frequently ſet it ſelf up againſt God's Appointments, and oppoſed Revelation, either by Diſtruſting, or Rejecting, or Perverting, or Refining it away; and if to ſay and prove this, (as Mr. *Y.* has done by undeniable Inſtances,) be to vilifie Reaſon, let it be ſtill more vile.

On the other hand, the *Remarker* in his Panegyricks upon Reaſon, puts me in mind of a Man upon a Bogg, who continually changes his footing, becauſe ſtanding long upon the ſame Turff, would expoſe him to ſink. Thus it is that he before (*p.* 3.) calls Reaſon a

Guide; and here (*p.* 4.) a *Judge*; anon (*p.* 6.) a *Councellor*. Now, whatever Advantage he propoſes by this ſhuffling of Terms, let us but conſider the diſtinct Notions of a Guide, and of a Judge; and that will be ſufficient to expoſe the Sophiſtry of all his Arguing. A Guide muſt be Deſpotick, and have abſolute Submiſſion, otherwiſe he can do no good in his Place; but a Judge is nothing ſo; he himſelf is Guided, and the Law is his Guide, which he muſt abide by; and his Reaſon only ſerves him to know what is Law, and to apply it to Fact. Should every Judge have it in his Commiſſion to be likewiſe a Legiſlator, we ſhould have but a ſorry account of Publick Juſtice. And ſo were Reaſon to form the Scheme of what we are to believe, or to reform Revelation, whereby (through God's goodneſs) we have it done to our hands, we muſt expect the ſame ſorry Iſſue in Religion.

But

But becauſe it is nauſeous to follow this Remarker in his Maze of Trifling, I will chuſe to ſit down a little, and tell a Story.

Once upon a time, *Authades* being upon a Journey, was met by *Eupithes*, who after a Friendly Salutation, ask'd him whither he was Travelling? Whither am I Travelling, (quoth *Authades*) that is a pretty familiar Queſtion, however I will Anſwer it (becauſe) I am Travelling to *Hagiopolis*. God ſpeed you thither, (reply'd *Eupithes*,) *Hagiopolis* is a very Entertaining Place; but would you give me patience, I would ask whether you know the way thither? Do you queſtion my Knowledge too, ſays *Authades*? 'Tis ſo you ſhow your breeding; but know Sir, I have Eyes, and Eyes that have guided me hitherto, and never led me out of my way; and therefore I need no other Conduct for my preſent Journey. Eyes are uſeful

to Travellers (reply'd *Eupithes*) but (with ſubmiſſion) how can they lead you in a way where you are altogether a Stranger? For Example, Your way lies by yonder Mountain, and your Eyes may poſſibly lead you thither, becauſe you have it in your view; but when you come beyond that, the Way is perfectly intricate and obſcure, and therefore, if you will be ſafe, you muſt neceſſarily take a Guide. I take a Guide? (reply'd *Authades*,) thou Trifler, the Advice is an Affront to me, 'tis an expreſs *Declamation againſt Eye-ſight, the beſt faculty that Heaven has beſtow'd upon Travellers.* Muſt I take a Guide? *Then farewel Eye ſight, and welcome Blindneſs; Faculty away, we have no uſe for you.* Pardon me, Sir, I beſeech you (ſays *Eupithes*) I would not have you put out your Eyes, they will be ſtill of uſe to you to diſcern and follow your Guide; but if they pretend to lead, they muſt miſlead you. Eyes miſlead

Page 4.

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(reply'd *Authades*) thou haſt not the leaſt taſt of Philoſophy, Eyes cannot miſlead. The moſt accurate Philoſopher of all my Acquaintance, uſes to ſay of Reaſon, *that Reaſon cannot miſguide, because if it does miſguide, it is not Reaſon, it is only Inconſideration, Raſhneſs, and Preſumption*; and I ſay the ſame of Eyes, if they miſlead, they are not Eyes, they are only Balls ſtuff'd up with that kind of Ingredients. I am not expert at your Sophiſtry (reply'd *Eupithes*,) but I heartily wiſh your welfare, and therefore think my ſelf oblig'd to make you aware of an Inſtance, wherein I know not how your Eyes can avoid miſtaking. The Road is diſtinguiſh'd by ſeveral *Mercuries*, ſome White, ſome Yellow; the Yellow point out the Right Turnings, and the White thoſe that muſt be avoided. Now, Sir, I obſerve that your Eyes are tinctur'd with the Jaundice; and notwithſtanding that, give me leave

Page 8. & *paſſim.*

to

to ſay, they are Eyes ſtill; but being ſo affected, they will certainly miſtake the Colour, and will appear to be Yellow. Still more deplorably Ignorant! (cries *Authades*) *Doſt thou not know, that Eye-ſight is the only Faculty that God has given us to judge of Colours by? And can Eyes miſtake Colours? Then ſurely we are very hardly dealt with.* And ſo farewel, thou luckleſs Pretender to Advice.

Page 9.

With this farewel, on he Travels to the Mountain before him; and was no ſooner come thither, but he was met by *Philander*; a Man who had devoted himſelf to Charitable Offices, and therefore in compaſſion to thoſe that Travell'd to *Hagiopolis*, he made his Abode there in a Cottage, offering his Conduct to all that paſs'd by; and the ſame he offer'd to *Authades*: But he, obſerving *Philander*'s humble Perſonage, and mean Habit, and that his Air was not aſſuming (as all theirs was, whom he was

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wont to admire) deſpis'd the Overture, and told *Philander*, he took it in ſcorn, that one of ſuch a contemptible appearance ſhould pretend Information to him: For (ſays he) know, that my very Sagacity and firſt gueſs, amounts to a better direction than I can expect from all thy pretended Experience: But, in ſhort, I take thee for a Cheat, that lurkeſt here only to catch the Reverence of thoſe thou abuſeſt; and ſuch Cheats I perceive are very common.

Philander replies, Sir, I am very ſorry you will not give me leave to ſerve you; but before we part, pray ſuffer one Queſtion from me: Are not you, Sir, (I pray) one of that Family they call the *Deiſts*? For I obſerve, that when any of them come this way, they always treat me on this very manner. I gueſs'd thou waſt bold enough (cries *Authades*) and now thou haſt ſhew'd it; by reflecting upon ſuch a Family of Gentlemen, whereof many are of great

Worth,

Worth, and Exact Philoſophers: But I think it not convenient (as yet) to own my ſelf One of them; and therefore, at leaſt for a ſmall Experiment of thy Skill, I will venture my ſelf with thee, ſome part of my Journey. Sir, (reply'd *Philander*) it will be a pleaſure to me to ſee you make a happy progreſs; but that you may do ſo, ſuffer my Advice, That you leave off this Opiniatrity and Conceit, to which I perceive you have addicted your ſelf; for I never knew any ſucceed in this way, that were not humble and tractable: Keep cloſe to me therefore, and renounce your own Wiſdom; neither Diſtruſt me, nor Diſpute with me; but remember that I am your Guide, and a Guide cannot profit without entire ſubmiſſion. What, Sir, (ſays *Authades* in a rage) you my Guide? And I renounce my Wiſdom? Know, Sir, that my Wiſdom is as good as your own; Is *yours from above? So is mine too*; and

and I will not renounce it. And what? You my Guide? I thought (like a Thief as you look) you intended to ſteal this Honour from my Eyes, but you ſhall not; for know, I will never depart from this, *That my Eyes are my Guide*; and they ſhall have the Credit on't, at my Journey's end. Alas! (reply'd *Philander*) I fear we are not like to hold long together, and yet I will be as Indulgent to you as I can; I will therefore allow, that your Eyes ſhall (in a limited Senſe) be call'd your Guide, but it is only to obſerve and follow me; for my ſelf muſt be the Leader both of you, and your Eyes, or elſe you will never come to the End you preſume upon. Sir, you are miſtaken (reply'd *Authades*) I have an Expedient for this too; for know, I will both Follow and Lead together: For though you *go before*, yet (take notice) I am Judge of your Diſcretion and Conduct; and when I like not the Road

you

you lead me in, I ſhall oblige you to take to another; or elſe you muſt expect Correction from me. Oh! Now, Sir, (ſays *Philander*) I am ſure I know your Relations; they are thoſe we call *Socinians*; whoſe faſhion it is, when they come here for my direction, to take me violently by the ſhoulders, and if they like not the Path I lead them in, they immediately force me to another, which they pretend to like better; and ſo I loſe all my pains upon them, and therefore am now willing to ſhift them, for my own quiet. I thought thou hadſt no better Underſtanding (reply'd *Authades*) for although I do not own my ſelf of that Family neither at preſent, yet I muſt tell thee, they are Men of Noble Spirits, and free Enquirers into Truth; and I would rather Err with their Ingenuous Freedom, than creep into Vaſſalage to thy *Pedantry*, and Forms. And ſo Adieu.

This

This is the Story; which may ſerve for the Plan of all the Matter in Diſpute. The Offices of Eyes, without a Man, and of Reaſon within, are throughly parallel: I leave the reſt of the Application to the Reader; and to the *Remarker*, to make what Exceptions he thinks fit.

IV. The Fourth Charge is, *That Mr. Y. gives Papiſts advantage againſt Proteſtants, and Eſtabliſhes the moſt pernicious Principles of Popery.*

And why ſhould he not be Stoned for it, next time he paſſes? But ſure Mr. *Y.* who obliges *Reaſon* to enquire into the Dictates of God, and to forbear its Own; who ties up Faith to the H. Scripture, and blames *Papiſts*, as much as others, for diminiſhing its Authority, is like to give very little ad-

vantage to the Popiſh Cauſe, and the *Remarker* as little to the Proteſtant; who, tho' Treating of the Guide in Religion, has never vouchſafed ſo much as once to pronounce, either *the Holy Scripture*, or, *the word of God*, or *the Goſpel of Chriſt*; Terms, which we have thought hitherto to be moſt ally'd to that Subject, as well as moſt endeared to Proteſtant Ears.

It is more to be apprehended, that He, who drives ſo fairly to ſet up Infallibility in every Man, will not be ſo ungentile upon occaſion, as not to allow, that *One* may be infallible in ſo large a Communion. And I am ſure the Proteſtant Wiſdom of all the paſt Age has been out, if the Man, who can let himſelf to be a Champion for *Separatiſts*, and can proſtitute all his Faculties to puzzle Truth (as the *Remarker* does) be not the beſt Factor for *Papery*.

V. The

V. The Fifth Charge is, *That he likewiſe gives* Deiſts *and* Socinians *occaſion to think ill of the Proteſtant Cauſe, and Principles.*

Alas, tender Man! what Charity he has for thoſe that are in Error? even ſo much Charity, that he would not have them diſturb'd out of the Principle that makes them ſo. He is angry with Mr. *Y.* for not Exhorting *Deiſts* and *Socinians* to hearken to *Reaſon* (*p.* 9.) while, inſtead of that, Mr. *Y.* was Exhorting them to hearken to the Goſpel, and proving, that it is the higheſt Act of Reaſon to do ſo: 'Tis true, the *Remarker* ſays, that he has not done this with ſuch Strength and Evidence as he might have done (*p.* 6.) Now indeed I thought Mr. *Y.* had done it well enough to ſave himſelf from blame; but ſince the *Remarker* thinks other-

wiſe, 'tis but what we ought to expect from *his Zeal for Faith*, that he ſhould perfect the Work by his own Undertaking.

VI. The Sixth Charge is, *That Mr. Y. contradicts himſelf, and ſets up* Reaſon *for the Supreme Judge.*

He that pleaſes himſelf with this Style of Speaking--*If we cannot diſtinguiſh what is Contradictory, we are in a ſad Caſe, and very hardly dealt with with*; as the *Remarker* does (*p.* 10.) methinks obligeth himſelf to take care, as well for the honour of God, as for his own; that where he imputes a Contradiction, it ſhould appear to be one: Yet the *Remarker* takes no ſuch Care, when he Charges Mr. *Y.* with Contradicting himſelf; becauſe in one place he denies *Reaſon* to be a Guide, and in another, allows it to be a Judge: The wide and

diffe-

different import of theſe two Notions (ſpoken of and repeated already) will eaſily diſcharge M. Y. from this Imputation. But let the *Remarker* diſcharge himſelf if he can, from a continued prevarication thro' all he has Written: Let him that Charges Mr. Y. ſo contemptuouſly for confounding the Notion of Wiſdom (of which I think he is well acquitted) acquit himſelf for confounding ſo groſly the Notion of a Guide. The Proper and Vulgar Notion of a Guide, imports One that is to Conduct a Traveller in the Way to which he is a Stranger: And *Reaſon* being naturally as much a Stranger to Matters of *Faith*, lies under the neceſſity of having ſuch a Guide in thoſe Matters. Now the *Remarker* never vouchſafes one Reflection upon this; but (quite contrary) ſets up *Reaſon* to be its own Guide in theſe Matters that are confeſſedly beyond its reach. Had he

barely a mind that *Reaſon* ſhould be call'd a Guide in that limited and unuſual Senſe, wherein the Traveller's Eyes may be call'd a Guide, while they conduct him to his Leader: Mr. *Y.* is not at all affected with his Combat, he only Fights with a Shadow of his own Caſting; but if he calls *Reaſon* a Guide in the common ſenſe of the word, or if he calls it *the Supreme Guide* in any ſenſe, (as he does call it ſo expreſly, *p.* 4.) what need has he any longer to diſguiſe his Communion?

In a word----I can gather no other from what this Gentleman has ſaid thro' all his *Remarks*, than this, (*viz.*) That he is an Inſidious Friend to *Religion*; and it would be more honeſtly done, would he pleaſe to profeſs himſelf an open Enemy. Then, with a better face might he bring forth his *Achillæum*, and attack the H. *Scripture*, which is the Attempt he ſeems all along

to

to itch at; or (at leaſt) he might furniſh us with more Interpretations, ſuch as he has given us a Specimen of, upon 2 *Cor.* x. 5. and that will do his buſineſs as well.

VII. The Seventh Charge is, *That the only favourable Conſtruction that can be put upon his declaiming againſt* Reaſon, *which is the main Deſign of his whole Book, is, to ſuppoſe he goes about to prove, what no body denieth.*

As for Declaiming againſt *Reaſon*, I muſt refer the Reader to the Story or Parable recited before, where he meets with the Parallel: But as for the *Remarker's* favourable Conſtruction, I muſt tell him, That without any grains of his favour, there is no well inform'd Chriſtian that will deny what Mr. *Y.* has aſſerted in theſe *Diſcourſes*: And nevertheleſs he is beholden to the *Remarker*

for denying it ſo far as he has done; becauſe theſe *Diſcourſes* muſt have loſt Credit with better Men, had they been ſuch as merited the Approbation of ſuch a *Cenſor*. Of whom I now take leave, with this Advertiſement---*That the Excellency of* Reaſon *is no more an Argument againſt the Wiſdom of* Believing, *than the Excellency of Writing is an Argument for a Man to Write againſt his Creed.*---

FINIS.

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